EVERY DAY LIFE
ON
A CEYLON COCOA ESTATE.

By

MARY E. STEUART

ILLUSTRATED WITH

TWENTY PICTURES FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

BY F. SKEEN & CO. OF COLOMBO

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PREFACE

Miss Gordon Cumming and others have written so well and so exhaustively on the subject of Ceylon that there is little left to say, and I should not have presumed to put in my word were it not that, writing as I do from a Planter's Bungalow, I think I have tapped a new and different stratum of information.

Should you, my dear Sir, or Madam, who have lived in the island as many years as I have months, perchance open this little book, my earnest advice is, "Close it at once." Your experienced eye will find nothing but the tritest of truisms.

My point of view must needs be superficial. I write mainly as a woman to women—the mothers, sisters, and future wives in England

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of the young Planters in Ceylon, to give them some few details of the daily life on a Ceylon Cocoa Estate as I have known it, details which the women who stay at home crave to know, and the men who go abroad mostly disdain to give.

MARY E. STEUART.

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Everyday Life on a Ceylon Cocoa Estate.

CHAPTER I

I WAS always fond of seeing new countries, so when I received a pressing invitation from my son to spend the winter with him in Ceylon, I quickly made up my mind to accept, and took my passage in the Bibby Liner "Cheshire," only too glad to escape the damp and cold of an English winter. I sailed from the Mersey one murky November morning, but quickly emerged into sunshine, and after an exceptionally fine voyage with the pleasantest of company, arrived in Colombo early in December, where I was met by my son.

He had written of a delightful bungalow with tennis court, and rose garden, within a short distance of Kandy, and surrounded by pleasant neighbours. Imagine my disappointment when

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I found that, with the uncertainty appertaining to everything in Ceylon, he had been transferred to an estate lately bought by the Company (his employers); an estate so isolated that there were no neighbours within visitable distance; where he had to send sixteen miles for provisions, and, worst of all, where the bungalow only contained sufficient accommodation for a bachelor. There was nothing to be done but to make the best of an awkward situation. I obtained permission to add a room to the house, and made up my mind to face a certain amount of roughing with a cheerful countenance. I have since found out, that what I missed in civilization and comfort, I gained in novelty and interest.

To beguile the long long hours when I was alone I began to write my impressions. I don't think they will be of any general interest, for I am neither a botanist, entomologist, or geologist, and must necessarily take a very superficial view of my surroundings; but I think there are many mothers who will like to have some idea of the sort of life their dear ones lead in Ceylon; and perhaps some young English girls whose love-dreams include a possible home in this delightful island, may be interested in reading a few details of our daily routine. It must, however, be well understood that I do not write of the older estates, which are as comfortable as a

well-appointed English house, but of the everyday life of a young planter in a rather out of the way place.

The first thing that strikes one is the intense loneliness—day after day passes without a glimpse of a white face. I would urge anyone, sending a son to Ceylon, to study his disposition and count the cost. To an English boy fresh from the cricket and football fields of a public school, or the companionship of the University, the isolation must be terrible, and many are the sad stories one hears, of moral, mental, and physical breakdown. But, to a young man who does not mind solitude, who interests himself intelligently in his work, is fond of reading, and has the luck to be under a kind and judicious *Peria Dorei* (or Superintendent) the life is a very pleasant one.

I must here explain the rather complicated system of management of Ceylon Estates, where everything possible is done to safeguard the interests of the absent proprietor, or shareholders as the case may be. First in importance comes the V.A. or visiting agent. He may, or may not be, a partner in the firm of Colombo shipping agents, who ship the produce, and through whose hands most of the business passes. He visits the Estates once in three months, audits the accounts monthly, in some cases arranges about the shipment of crop, and is a sort of final

court of appeal. Under him is the Perin Dorei (or great master) usually called P.D. The manager of the Estate or group of Estates, has one or more Sinne Doreis (or little Masters) under him according to the size of the property. The P.D. gives general orders, interferes when necessary, and has daily reports of work, and monthly accounts sent him; but does not interfere much in the details which he leaves to his S.D's. In our case, my son Rob has charge of an Estate ten miles away from his P.D., who only visits it about once in ten days; so necessarily Rob has more responsibility, and a freer hand than most S.D's would have. This adds much to his interest in his work, and as he has a strong liking and personal regard for his P. D., as well as complete faith in his technical knowledge, the relations between them are on the pleasantest footing possible. The terms V.A., P.D., and S.D., will have to be used so often that it is quite necessary to understand them thoroughly.

After considering a good many pros and cons, and setting masons and carpenters to work, the first week in January found me on the Estate which we will call Raneetotem. The bungalow is a long, low, tiled edifice, more like a glorified barn than anything else I can think of. It is whitewashed within and without, and has a white ceiling cloth, lining the high pitched roof.

In the space between, rats hold high carnival every night. Substantial stone partitions, reaching to within a few feet of the roof, divide the bedrooms from the one sitting-room. A verandah surrounds three sides of the building, while at the other end, store-room and bath-room are added. The kitchen and servant's room are in a separate hut. This has its advantages inasmuch as it keeps the house cool to have no fires, but makes it extremely irksome and throat scraping to give loud shouts whenever one wants anything.

I hope all the good housewives won't be utterly shocked when I say, I have never yet been inside the kitchen. I was strongly advised not to do so, as being rather fastidious, a sight of the native methods of cooking might seriously damage my appetite, and as the one panacea everyone gives for avoiding fever is " Eat—eat —eat," this advice was not to be deprecated. I believe there is no proper fireplace in the kitchen, only a fire on the hearth and a clay oven, and the water for my bath is always heated in an empty Keresine tin (but of course it has been thoroughly purified from its original aroma). The breakfasts and dinners that are produced out of this primitive kitchen would do credit to the most orderly Western menage.

We have done all we can to make our very unpromising-looking rooms homelike. Photo-

graphs, and pictures, antlers, and various ornaments adorn the walls; numberless cushions make the chairs and sofas comfortable, and books, newspapers, and work lie about in all directions. Flowers give colour and cheerfulness, such flowers as you in England have in greenhouses, here they grow wild, and are generally brought me by the coolies who have observed my love for them, and are quite pleased with a few cents in return. As I write I have before me, pink oleander, the golden mohur, scarlet hibiscus, a kind of mauve greenhouse periwinkle; a yellow trumpet flower, and champac from which frangipani is distilled, it is here called the "temple flower," as it is usually one of the offerings at the Buddhist temples. In Kandy, on one of their high festivals, I saw a Sinhalese lady, followed by her servants carrying champac blossoms on silver trays, proceeding to offer them on the beautiful silver altars prepared for the purpose. In the verandah we have many pots filled with ferns, caladiums, and other foliage plants.

Our little establishment consists of two servants, and a kitchen "cooly." The "appu," or headservant, who has been some years with Rob, is a kind of Admirable Crichton, he cooks an excellent dinner, looks after the poultry, superintends the garden, gives a general supervision to his Master's clothes, and when meat

runs short goes out and shoots a hare or some pigeons. He is only twenty-two, but besides the qualifications I have mentioned, he speaks Malay, Tamil, Cingalese, and English, and is most useful on emergency, as an interpreter.

Next in importance to him comes a boy of seventeen, a Malay, who lives for his smart caps and coats, and is as stupid as his fellow-servant is clever. He was chosen on my arrival because he thinks he can understand English. His business is to sweep and dust the Bungalow, attend to my room, wait at table, and act generally as a sort of house-parlourmaid. The kitchen cooly does the usual work of a between-maid in an English house, and also gets the necessary firewood. In addition, Rob has a horsekeeper who grooms and looks after his horse, and occasionally condescends to lend a hand in the Bungalow, or to bring me a jungle fern, but this is quite an extra piece of civility on his part. The kitchen cooly and horse-keeper are allowed us by the Estate; at least they allot two allowances to this Estate, and we have chosen these two. The other "boys" only cost £2 a month in wages between them, and a certain amount of rice, and keep themselves.

It is the cheap labour which makes it possible to live in Ceylon on the small salaries given to the assistants, and younger superintendents,

which I do not hesitate to say are decidedly inadequate. It is scarcely worth while to leave home, country, and friends to live out here in an exhausting climate with heavy responsibilities, and often almost in complete isolation, on the salary of a junior clerk in a London office; unless as in my son's case, you are thoroughly interested in your work for its own sake, and love the sunshine, and the heat. It is the old story of supply and demand; here, as in England, for every vacant post, there are numberless applicants, and the equally well worn tale of the depreciation of the rupee. The salaries were arranged when one hundred rupees represented ten pounds; now, they only count for seven pounds; and though meat and poultry and eggs cost little more than their old price, every imported article, whether of food or clothing has gone up in proportion, as the rupee has gone down.

This is a thirsty land, and one fertile source of expense is the necessity of drinkables of some sort. All doctors seem to agree that some stimulant is necessary for most people, in face of the hard exercise taken and the exhausting heat. Suppose, however, an unusual case, that a man can do without any stimulant, he must even then spend nearly as much in mineral waters, for in very few situations, in the low country, can the water be drunk even boiled

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COOLY GIRL CUTTING OFF COCOA PODS. Plate II.

and filtered, without the risk of enteric fever. Perhaps in a few years salaries may be re-adjusted.

Raneetotem is, in the main, a cacao Estate with just a little coffee, also pepper, rubber, vanilla, cotton, and cocoanuts but no tea. In the old days it was all planted with coffee, but came to grief in the time of Ceylon's great disaster, when the coffee diseases ruined numbers of great Estates which had to be abandoned, or sold just for what they would fetch. Since then cocoa has been planted here on several hundred acres, and bids fair to do well. Cocoa is a very handsome plant, or rather shrub, growing to a height of from 6 to 18 feet. The flowers are insignificant and appear almost stalkless on the stems and branches, but they produce large pods, five or six inches in length of every shade of red, and also yellow, according to the variety of cocoa. Caracas, which is the original kind introduced from Trinidad and still commands top price, has bright red pods, whilst those of Forastero a coarser, and some think, a hardier variety, are in many shades of red, orange, yellow, and even white. Cocoa was first brought to Ceylon as an ornamental shrub some fifty years ago. There is an old tree of that age in Kalutera, another on Keenakelle Estate, Badulla, at 4,000 feet above sea level, and several in

different parts of Colombo. Its cultivation, however, as an article of commerce, seems to be a comparatively recent event, for I notice in an old Ceylon Directory of 1875 it is scarcely mentioned; the edition of 1881 gives 7,000 acres, and the edition of 1887 12,500 acres as planted with cocoa. In 1902 the acreage in cocoa including native gardens is estimated at 31,136. In 1878 the export of cocoa is quoted as only 10 cwts, 1897 we have 34,500 cwts, and 1898 39,982 cwts, in 1901 it rose to 49,459 cwts.

To Mr. Tytler of Pallekelly Estate in Dumbera, belongs, I believe, the honour of having first grown and prepared it systematically for exportation. All parts of Ceylon are not favourable for its culture; the high elevations are too cold, and in the low country bordering the coast, it appears not to be so productive, as in the rich valleys of Dumbera, Matale, Kurunagala and Uva. Even here it has many natural enemies in the shape of ants, a disease called Helopeltis, and two kinds of fungus, one of which attacks the bark, and the other the pod, and through the pod stem reaches the tree. Of late years, the bark and pod diseases have become so serious, that a scientific expert was obtained from England, who has done much in studying the evil, and in (it is hoped) finding a remedy. The cocoa

tree produces two crops in the year, one the so-called spring crop, ripening from May to July, the other the autumn crop from November to February.

The picking is a pretty sight, many women are employed, and their gay clothes and glittering jewellery, and the heaped up red pods give a rich note of colour to the shaded groves in which they work. When the daily portion of pods has been collected, they are opened with a tap from a sharp curved knife, and the beans extracted with a turn of the finger, they are then placed in open baskets, and carried to the store for curing, and the empty pods are at once buried in holes already dug, any which by accident or carelessness remain unburied, at the end of a few weeks emit a most offensive odour. On arrival at the store the beans are weighed, and then piled up and covered for the purpose of fermentation. Each proprietor has his own method of curing, which partakes of the nature of a trade secret; so I do not feel at liberty to divulge the plan carried out on this Estate; but a very usual way is to ferment for two days, then wash and dry in the sun until the cuticle of the bean becomes a reddish orange colour and quite brittle, and the inside a rich brown. In wet or cloudy weather the drying process is carried on inside the store, in the heated clarehue

instead of outside, on the cemented barbecue in the sunshine.

As Ceylon cocoa has become more abundant, the price has gone down. It was at one time sold for one hundred shillings a hundred-weight, and even more, whilst now it only commands from fifty to eighty shillings according to the quality; but even at the lower rate it yields a handsome return. How true it is that no one can foresee the far reaching effect of their slightest action. The kindly impulse of our late Queen, to send a Christmas gift of chocolate to her soldiers in the field proved a perfect godsend to Ceylon cocoa planters. The price immediately rose to nearly its old level, owing to the sudden and urgent demand, but fell again somewhat when that demand was over. Still, as I said before, it yields a very good, and sufficient profit.

An enterprising family of Planters have now established a flourishing Cocoa and Chocolate Manufactory. Although it has only been established a few years they have already a large business with Australia and India, as well as Europe, and it is much to be hoped that their enterprise and industry will be rewarded by financial success.

CHAPTER II

I had scarcely settled down to my new life, when an invitation arrived for a dance. Our kind friends the M.'s had seized upon the double excuse of a birthday, and also the two days holiday at the time of the Tamil Thai Pongal Festival to fix January 12th, for a sort of house-warming party, on the occasion of Mr. M. taking over the charge of a group of cocoa Estates in Dumbera. Our invitation having duly come, the vital question of transit next presented itself. My son's horse was lame, a great part of the road unfit for my bicycle and ten long miles (and *very* long the Ceylon miles are) had to be traversed; so we had recourse to the good-nature of a neighbour, who lent us a bullock hackery, a vehicle which demands a few words of description. Imagine an Irish jaunting car, with the seats turned to face fore and aft, at each corner an iron rod which supports a waterproof canopy. The hackery has a pole, to this at the carriage end

a little round flat piece of wood is attached, on which the driver sits, at the other end is a yoke which lies between the hump and the head of the bulls, and to which they are fastened by a somewhat complicated arrangement of rope, the reins also being thin rope. The dress of the driver baffles description, a red loin cloth, and red turban are the principal items, but in this case a short white jacket was added, out of respect for me. The white "running bulls" are handsome animals, with large, pathetic dark eyes, enormous dewlaps, and magnificent horns, they only took two hours to go ten miles part of it over a very bad road.

Our means of conveyance being settled, the next important question was at what time we should start; this, however, did not take long to arrange, for I absolutely declined to go in the heat of the day, for, two hours travelling under a Ceylon sun reduces one to a state of limpness, quite incompatible with the enjoyment of society. Wednesday, the 12th, dawned. Heavy rain during the night warned us that the N.E. monsoon was not yet over, but at 7·30 a.m. we made a start in spite of showery weather, but, first a box coolie had to be despatched carrying on his head a light tin box containing all my "chiffons." This is the custom of the country, and even young men riding to pay a few hours visit, are preceded

by their box coolie carrying the inevitable "steel trunk" on his head.

Our drive was through most enchanting scenery—starting from the wooded mountain gorges of further Dumbera we passed under avenues of redflowered Dadop (called in Central America "the mother of Cacao" on account of its valuable shade). Banians, jak trees, laden with their colossal fruit, and tall elegant grevilliœs; whilst beneath grew Caracas cacao with its red, and Forastero with its crimson and golden pods, and glistening coffee bushes. Now and again we drove over grassy pattenas dotted with clumps of aloes; then a native Estate would bring us to a truly tropical scene, plantains, their long leaves shivering in the breeze, and Areca and Cocoanut Palms reminding one of the Kew hothouses, only every tree magnified four times in size. The red wayside rocks were clothed everywhere with the most lovely creepers, and luxuriant fern fronds. Sometimes a green paddy (rice) field, and little groups of native huts with their inhabitants in picturesque bright costumes varied the scene. Occasionally we passed a cluster of native shops, with their curious wares, arranged in the verandah for passers-by to see, bunches of bananas depending from the roof, on the counter a few eggs on a plantain leaf, a little dried fish, various curious

stuffs, ring shaped cakes, made of honey and flour, bunches of bright beads and other articles dear to the native heart, whilst inside the huts, one might sometimes catch glimpses of shelves laden with gaudy cottons, and the cloths worn by Tamil coolies. I would mention incidentally that a frock of very bright pink cotton seems to be thought the very acme of fashion for little children's wear. Our head Kangany has a bright little boy of two years old, his usual rig is a silver necklace, and another to match which he wears round his waist with a very large silver locket hanging therefrom, presumably to answer the purpose of the primeval fig leaves; but, he also possesses a pink cotton frock in which his mother sometimes proudly clothes him,—but no sooner does he get out of her clutches than he takes off his gorgeous garment, and appears again in his necklaces.

At last we reached our destination rather damp in apparel, from the heavy showers, but not so in spirit; for, on me at least, the novelty of my surroundings had a most exhilarating effect. We had a hospitable reception from our host, and his sister, and then I turned to look at the enchanting view. The bungalow stands on a knoll, fronting what is to all appearance a lovely English Park; a herd of cattle grazing under a clump of shady trees

adding to the resemblance; beyond this park-like pattena, are many broad acres of cocoa and coffee which here stretch across the valley—a magnificent range of mountains rises to the north, the highest peak, called Hunasgeyria, attaining an altitude of four thousand nine hundred feet.

This is a view one could never tire of, whether seen in thè rosy dawn, or at golden sunset; or even in the gloom of monsoon time, when fleecy clouds cap the highest peaks, or chase each other along the black sides and into the deep ravines.

Inside the bungalow, in spite of the rain, all was brightness; roses and lilies adorning the principal rooms. By noon most of the guests had arrived, and we sat down to a sumptuous breakfast, after the fashion of continental breakfasts. The intended programme of afternoon amusement, golf, tent-pegging, tennis, and croquet had to be given up owing to bad weather; and indoor games and cards substituted. Everyone, however, seemed as happy as possible, and, as with the exception of our host's mother, and myself, all were young and unmarried, the fun seemed never to flag. At half past seven came dinner, which would have done credit to a London chef. The table decorations were lovely—a tall centrepicee filled with Bermuda lilies stood on a long strip

of pink silk, on which were strewed red, yellow and green fruits, whilst a number of slender vases, containing delicate tea roses were placed at intervals down the edge of the silk. We were capitally waited on by six native servants all dressed in spotless white with white turbans. The ladies' pretty ball dresses completed the scene, and I could not help wishing that some of my English friends, who thought I had gone to "the wilds," could have been present.

I will not describe the dance, for it was much as other dances, excepting that there were no "wallflowers," and that the waltzes were (as one might perhaps expect in this hot climate) danced a little more slowly than at home ; but I noticed no deficiency of energy in the Washington post, Pas-de-quatre, or the Lancers. Light refreshments, and unlimited claret cup, as well as other drinkables were served all the evening.

The distances were too great for anyone to go home that night, and by dint of great ingenuity on the part of our hostess, we were all housed. After a late breakfast next morning, most of us went our various homeward ways, having much enjoyed the unaccustomed gaiety ; but a flooded river prevented the Kandy contingent from leaving. So a large house party remained on, who on the principle of "You can't have too much of a

good thing," had a repetition of the dance on the next evening.

Some days previously I had had an experience of a very different kind of dancing. One evening my son and I were sitting quietly in the verandah when we were startled by the beating of tom-toms, and the sound of strange instruments close at hand. On enquiry we found that being close upon Pongal time, the coolies of a neighbouring Estate, but living close to our boundary, wished to dance for us. So we graciously accepted the honour, and the entertainment began.

I shall never forget the weird scene. What a medley of races and civilisations. In the verandah we sat—an English lady, and gentleman in conventional evening dress—behind us stood our Malay servants; whilst outside on the gravelled terrace were grouped figures who, in feature and attire, might have belonged to a period contemporary with Abraham or Moses. The background immediately behind the dancers was a belt of trees, but to the right, tall cocoanut palms shot up against a starlight sky, whilst between their graceful stems, one could see distinctly in the bright moonlight, range after range of mountains fading away in the distance.

There were no women amongst the twenty performers, but one man was dressed to per-

sonate a woman ; he wore a wig parted in the middle and drawn down over the ears, an imitation of the old-fashioned "cottage bonnet" in brass, turned back at the edge—(which must have been frightfully heavy)—a quantity of jewellery, a muslin dress and a shawl-like covering over the shoulders. They prefaced the dance by a sort of prelude on the so-called musical instruments, then a man stepped forward singing, in a slow sort of chanting way, then another joined in what appeared a kind of dialogue duet always getting faster; at length the lady rushed quickly to the front, performing the most extraordinary gyrations, turning first to one and then to the other, she sang at them both in a shrill scolding voice. These three men were evidently the principal performers, the others acted the part of chorus, chiming in occasionally whilst the tom-toms marked time. I have not the least idea what it was all about, but I imagine that the two men were suitors for the lady's hand, and that she wavered between the two, as many other ladies do. The singing was not melodious, but the good time kept, and the graceful rhythmical movement of the feet, was very pleasant to watch. Whilst this grand ballet was being executed, at the side under the palms two men with long lances were having a sham encounter; at last they got so excited, that it

became real earnest, and they had to be separated by their friends. Soon after Rob called the headman of the party, tendered him our thanks, and dismissed them with a present; but first each performer came and prostrated himself at Rob's feet and then at mine, with a curious motion of the hand as if picking something off the ground. I do not know what it meant, but I am sure it was something gracious, for they all looked so pleased and happy; it may have been to denote that they accepted our present.

On my way out in the "Cheshire," I saw a better example of Sinhalese dancing from a troupe who had been performing at Marseilles and were returning to their native country as deck passengers. They gave us an exhibition on the main deck. The devil dancers wore an extraordinary get-up, artificial hips made of red and white cotton fringe which swung about as they danced. They had also curious masks and head decorations; and in this and the war dance which followed whirled about so wildly, and worked themselves up into such a frenzy that I was quite glad when it ended. Though curious and fantastic, the performance lacked the picturesque *mise-en-scene* the palms, the weird moonlight shadows, and the solitude, of our dancers.

On our return home the last evening of

Pongal, we passed through some native villages evidently "*en fête*." Arches decorated the fronts of some of the huts, whilst to the verandah posts of others, banana trees were tied, fringes of the young plantain leaves cut into curious shapes depended between the posts. Fire-work crackers were being let off, whilst along the roads we passed several men who had kept Pongal "not wisely, but too well."

Directly we reached home Rob was surrounded by men with complaints and quarrels to be settled. He knew they were all incidents of the Festival, so quietly told them to come again on the morrow, and, of course, heard no more about the matter. We also told our servant to let it be known we were too tired that night to receive a deputation of the coolies, which rumour said was going to wait upon us with presents, but that next day we should be very pleased to see them. Accordingly the next afternoon a little before sunset, we heard approaching tom-toms, and shortly afterwards were called to receive our visitors. They were headed by the principal kangany or overseer, a handsome, long haired Indian sheep with fine curling horns, decorated with flowers, was tied to the verandah post, the colour, red and black, and texture of its coat, resembling a goat much more than a sheep. Then there were two dishes handed to us, one

containing a pine apple and plantains, the other, eggs, two pounds of raisins, two pounds of sugar, some cocoanut toffee, and a tin of mixed biscuits, the last, to my amusement, bearing the ubiquitous brand "Made in Germany." Rob made a little speech of thanks. I, not understanding or speaking a word of Tamil, was at a loss what to do to show my gratitude, but I nodded, and smiled, and proceeded then and there to eat one of the plantains.

The Kangany and his wife then knelt on the ground at my feet, and prostrated themselves touching the earth with their forehead. This was somewhat embarrassing, for though this estate is called by the coolies Raneetotem, I am not at all accustomed to playing the part of a ranee on this or any other stage. Rob gave them a return present and as soon as they had gone a short distance, sent the sheep back to them with a great many thanks, and a polite message that he would not deprive them of it. I believe this was expected and great beating of tom-toms notified their approval; and so ended a truly Eastern scene. Only a pencil and brush could do justice to the picturesque group in their many coloured cloths and turbans, and the rich brown skins against the sombre green background. Above all the exquisite rosy tints of sunset, whilst in

the distance violet mountains reared their heads against a daffodil sky. Truly a tropical sunset is a perfect dream of beauty, and the figures in the foreground gave just the touch of life which completed the picture.

GROUP OF COCOA PODS AND BLOSSOMS Plate III.

CHAPTER III

JANUARY 19th.—Yesterday a message came from the Lines to say that a poor woman was very ill of fever. Rob asked whether she would like to have a doctor or to go to the hospital at Teldeniya five miles off. "To the Hospital," was the reply, so a cart was ordered, and in the course of my morning walk I met the procession under weigh. I saw nothing of the invalid but a limp mass of cloth lying on the floor of the bullock cart which had on its top a light wooden framework covered with layers of plaited cocoanut leaves, which makes a capital protection from both sun and rain. Near the cart walked a man, presumably her husband, and he and the bullock driver kept up a kind of melancholy chant as long as I was within hearing. On getting to Teldeniya the doctor pronounced the illness to be pneumonia, a disease both very common and very fatal to coolies in Ceylon. They seem to have no

stamina to stand against it, and a few hours often sees them dead. This woman utterly declined to stay in hospital, and came home again in spite of the long drive, so we are anxious about the result. Last week the head kangany had an attack of pneumonia, we found him (in spite of feeling desperately ill) rolled up in his blanket in a corner of the cocoa store. My son asked him what he meant by running such a risk and not taking care of himself.

"But I must do my work, and see that everything is going all right," he replied. However, Rob ordered another man to carry him off to his home, and before many hours had passed he was in high fever and delirium. If it had not been for Rob and the Appu attending to him themselves, applying mustard poultices, and so forth, whilst waiting for the doctor's arrival, he could not have recovered.

When a cooly is seriously ill the superintendent in charge of the Estate sends a printed form to the district medical officer, giving a few particulars, and his own diagnosis, also mentioning whether the case is in his opinion urgent. The doctor then, if he thinks it necessary, comes out as soon as he can, but there is often considerable delay, and this is quite unavoidable. When the district is an extensive one, the medical officer may be

many miles away at one end, whilst he is anxiously waited for in the opposite direction. In a case such as that of our cooly woman where the patient goes to head-quarters for advice, a printed paper is returned by the doctor, stating the illness and medicines and treatment prescribed. At stated times the superintendent has to fill in and send to the Government Agent a printed form enumerating all the births and deaths amongst the coolies on the Estate. I should strongly advise any young man coming out to Ceylon as a planter, to learn something of the science of medicine, and the treatment of different diseases, as well as to go through an ambulance course. My son had in his boyhood the great benefit of having the run of the surgery of one of the cleverest of doctors, and kindest of friends.

Last week, at Pongol time, Rob's horse-keeper asked leave to go and keep the feast with his friends about ten miles away. He was allowed to go, and faithfully promised to return last Friday, but alas! he has proved faithless. Ne'er a sight of him have we had, and yesterday we heard he had run away to another district, for some inscrutable reason of his own. It is the more provoking because his master had had him properly trained by a good groom. However, his week's wages are due to him, and these he cannot recover, as the Ceylon

law does not allow a coolie to vacate his place without leave unless sixty days wages are due to him. The masters generally take very good care to keep their wages debt within this limit.

During the afternoon two shots in quick succession made me run out to see what was the matter; then I found that the Appu had shot an enormous rat-snake six and a half feet long. They are handsome creatures, beautifully marked, and are harmless to human beings, but devour young chickens, and of course rats, hence the name. We often hear them on the roof at night in pursuit of the rats, who have a happy hunting ground between the ceiling cloth and the tiles. These rat-snakes are extraordinarily quick in their movements, and may be almost said to run, as they glide, head in air across the ground.

January 21st.—The poor woman with pneumonia is I am glad to say much better. One feels so helpless when any of the coolies are ill, for the distinctions of caste make it so utterly impossible to help them. They would rather die than eat any food cooked in our kitchen, and much prefer trying charms, and native medicaments rather than any treatment we could prescribe.

The great excitement to-day has been the hatching of a brood of turkeys, which we have all been anxiously watching. Five were

hatched, but alas! a stray hen trampled one little chick to death. Here, as elsewhere, they are difficult things to rear and proportionately expensive to buy.

It is two o'clock, and the bungalow has awakened to life once more. An hour ago, I slept in my room, the servants slept in the kitchen, the carpenter and mason slept beside their work, and the dogs slept in their kennels, reminding one of the ancient fairy tale; but here no enchanted prince came to break the spell. We all awoke of our own accord, when the afternoon siesta was over. If you try getting up at 5 a.m. on a hot summer day you will find how very sleepy you do get by midday. I tried in vain to prevail upon Rob to take a rest but he declared he must be off to watch the shade lopping, for if he left the coolies for a moment they would be sure to cut down the wrong branches. The shade lopping is an important business on cocoa Estates. Cocoa will not grow without shade, but too much is equally fatal, so it is quite an art to decide upon the right kind, and the right amount of shade to leave. Much anxiety is felt just now about the cacao disease which has done deadly damage in many parts of the island. Some planters aver that it attacks plants grown with too little sunlight, whilst others again advocate as an antidote

more frequent manuring and forking at the roots.

This morning a trespassing buffalo was caught. After remaining tied up here for some hours until a neighbouring Arachi (or village headman) was fetched to see that it was really caught here, and to assess the damage, the beast was sent to the nearest Courthouse, there to remain until claimed, or in case of no one claiming it, to be sold after the lapse of a certain time. These straying buffaloes belong to neighbouring villages, and do infinite damage to the cocoa, knocking down the pods, trampling them under foot, and breaking off the branches.

Other enemies are the wild pigs, who eat the cocoa and dig up quite large holes in the ground, whilst hunting about for rubber roots, which attract them by their sweetness. We have a great many wild pigs on Raneetotem. One morning whilst out walking I came close upon a huge boar, and his two wives. Rob promises himself and two friends a good pig drive, as soon as he is not quite so busy.

On January 22nd the M.'s hackery arrived by half past six in the morning to fetch me to spend Saturday and Sunday with them. I arrived at P—— just in time to see the commencement of the eclipse of the sun; it was only partial in Ceylon, but nevertheless was a

most interesting sight, and though the sky was cloudy the sun appeared often enough to enable us with smoked glasses to watch all the phases of the eclipse. The coolies, and even the Tamil Bungalow servants, acting on orders from their co-religionists in India, observed a strict fast all day until 4 p.m. The idea was, that the day after the eclipse was to be marked by some awful and mysterious event. So great was their anticipation, that I don't feel sure as to whether they were pleased or disappointed, when it passed in the same uneventful style, as most other days in Ceylon.

On Sunday I went with Mr. M. to the little schoolhouse, where preparations were being made for a short Church of England service to be held in Tamil. The catechist showed me the books he intended using, which consisted of a selection from the Book of Common Prayer, the Bible, and a volume called Tamil Lyrics which I conclude meant hymns. At my request he read me part of the Sermon on the Mount in Tamil. He did so in a most impressive and sonorous voice, it sounded grand, but I am told that the translation of the Bible is in such "high Tamil" that very few coolies (who usually speak a kind of low class dialect) can understand it. He afterwards introduced us to his wife, a sweet looking young girl, and their child, a dear little baby of eleven months,

very much disfigured by wearing on its head a knitted atrocity of pink and white wool such as one sees in village shops in England. On many Estates there are small school-rooms, and where there are a sufficient number of Christian coolies, a Sunday school, and now and then a short service is held in them on Sundays. Perhap school-rooms is a misnomer, they generally consist of a room standing on pillars—a kind of piazza—with a small room at oneend for the schoolmaster. The fittings include "tats"to keep out the sun, a large blackboard, benches for the pupils and a few books. The question ofeducation is interesting so I willquote from "The Ceylon Summary of Information by the Messrs. Ferguson."

"Through the Agency of a Government "Department of Public Instruction, and a grant "in aid system, chiefly availed of by the various "missionary societies, about 110,000 children, "or one in twenty-seven of the population, are "receiving instruction in English and the verna-"culars. Private schools, not connected with "missionaries or religious bodies are few and ill "supported. A knowledge of vernacular read-"ing and writing, generally very imperfect, is "communicated in some of the Buddhist temples, "'Pansalas,' and private native schools. A large "proportion of the population can sign their "names, who can do little more. Education in

"missionary schools is, of course strictly Christian. In Government Schools the custom is, "where no objection is offered, to read the "Bible during the first hour. Attendance "during that hour not compulsory, but pupils "seldom or never absent themselves." They then proceed to describe the splendid educational colleges in the large towns, but that has nothing to do with our subject.

On Raneetotem there are no Christians, and only about half a dozen children attend the school. The pupils are nearly all the children of the head Kangany who believes in the "higher education," and is therefore having his children taught English.

Our coolies have a Saami house (praying house) on the Estate, where they keep a sacred cobra, which they occasionally propitiate with offerings of chickens and also milk, a spot which I carefully avoid, but one evening Rob took me to see it. The devotions performed there must be of a very primitive kind. The temple is simply a roof of thatch supported by wooden posts, built in the midst of the cocoa bushes, quite out of the sight of any path or road. At one end is a huge ant-hill of conical form in which lives the cobra, and in this lies the sacredness of the spot. At the foot of the ant-hill is a small earthen chatty, and a square stone, about the size of an ordinary brick, a few

ashes, and a small piece of galvanized iron roofing on which some offering has evidently been placed. From post to post near the top hung a garland of threaded pendant cocoa leaves ; at the opposite end to the ant hill, were two rows of stones, rather irregularly placed, with a space of about a foot between the rows, the space being filled with ashes of a blue colour. The blue shade caused probably by kerosene oil having been used for fuel. Just outside the Saami house a triangular stone, with some signs cut on it, had been set on edge ; at the foot of this there were also traces of ashes. Similar triangular stones I have noticed on other Estates, and wherever you see them, there are always traces of burnt offerings having been made.

The other day, I accidentally came upon a smaller, evidently less important, Saami-place ; the space between the two huge buttresses thrown out by a banian tree had been carefully swept, and at one end the usual square stone and small earthen chatty had been placed. Poor people ! it is very sad to see their religious aspirations so mis-directed, one can only hope that the true God, whose children they also are, may listen to their ignorant prayers and take pity on them.

I returned home on Monday in time to see and hear a magnificent thunder-storm. The

rolling of the thunder, re-echoed by these wooded gorges was very fine. Later in the evening one of those scenes took place which are the perpetual worry of a planter's life. A cooly has to go twice a week into Kandy to fetch our provisions, which he has to carry home on his head in a ventilated tin box. The orders are all written by us in a book called a "beef book," this he takes with him. Obviously we must have food, but we are sixteen miles from Kandy, the nearest market, and it is not an enviable task to walk thirty-two miles, returning with a heavy load, and the coolies much dislike it. On this particular evening the "beef coolie" flatly declined to go, and threw the beef book on the floor of the kitchen. Of course, such a breach of discipline could not be allowed. My son was told, he sent for the delinquent, who could not be found in his Lines. Messenger after messenger having been despatched without any result, at last Rob said, "Well, if he doesn't come to-night he will be punished much more severely to-morrow."

Soon after he appeared having been in hiding in the branches of a jak tree. Needless to say, he was punished, and ended like a naughty child in being very repentant, and saying he would never refuse to go again. These natives have to be treated exactly like children, and managed

with a perfectly just, but very strict rule, they take advantage at once of any laxity of discipline, and only respect a firm hand. They appear never to resent punishment when their conscience tells them they deserve it.

JANUARY 26th.—This morning alas; we found three out of the four little turkeys dead in their nest,—killed in the night by black ants. The mother hen was all stung about the head in defending them. Rearing poultry out here is a disheartening business. What with insects, snakes, and sun-strokes, the poor things lead a precarious existence. The other day one of the ducks apparently quite well, walked into the open, and suddenly dropped down dead, it is supposed from heat apoplexy.

Yesterday the Peria Dorei, coloquially P.D. the manager of this group of estates, came for his usual visit of inspection; and very glad we always are to see him, bringing as he does, a whiff of the outer world, and a little outside news; for toujours Cocoa, like "toujours perdrix" becomes at times a little wearisome. We always hope he will arrive when our beef cooly has just brought the bi-weekly supply from Kandy, but yesterday, in spite of its being one of our "banian" (Sinhalese) for "Maigre" days, our appu managed to produce a most creditable menu. Mulligatawny soup, turbot with white sauce, chicken pie, cold

beef and mince pies with first rate coffee to follow. On Ceylon Estates there is a very complete system of supervision. Where several belong to the same company, the manager is supposed to visit each frequently to see that the assistant superintendent is doing his work properly; and once in three months the visiting agent comes to look up the manager, and also each of the assistant superintendents, so that anything going wrong, or any slack work, would be at once detected. In the same way the accounts pass through the manager's hands and have also to be examined and passed by the agent. All this carefulness ought to be very reassuring to English investors, for their interests are most strenuously guarded; but the risk of failure to crops owing to bad seasons and disease no one can forsee or avoid.

Raneetotem is so surrounded by jungle, that it seems to be a happy hunting ground for wild animals. Besides wild pigs and buffaloes, we have wild deer of three kinds, who are, however, very shy, and seldom show themselves; also an occasional cheetah—one was seen lately in a grass field close to the bungalow—jackals, hares, and porcupines. The jackals now and then make night hideous with their horrid howls, and are sometimes so daring that they come up almost to our verandah in

search of poultry; which, however, they never get here, for our poultry are shut up at sunset in a comfortable wattle and daub-house of their own. It has a roof of plaited palm leaves called here "cadjans." A most picturesque Tamil boy in a red turban attends to their wants. The porcupines are dangerous foes to dogs who have to go into the long grass to hunt hares. The porcupine darts his quills at the dogs, and Rob says he once saw a dog die out hunting after having three porcupine quills through his throat. They were darted with so much force that the quills absolutely went through the dog's throat and remained.

CHAPTER IV

We spent last Saturday and Sunday at P——, Mr. M. and Rob played in a cricket match at Kandy, and the rest of us stayed at home, and indulged in croquet and tennis. It is a delightful house to stay at, for you cannot only count upon a kind and hearty welcome, but can have your choice of amusement from golf to cards, including tennis, croquet, tent pegging, leaping and ball and bucket, and you are sure of finding someone ready to join you in one or all. These little outings send people back to work with fresh zest, and only the most confirmed misanthrope could grudge "the hard worked planter" this little break in his monotonous life.

To-day arose one of the often recurring worries consequent on caste. On this Estate at present we have only three low caste coolies; all the others are of such very high caste that they will not work as kitchen coolies, or be horsekeepers, or go to Kandy with our beef-

box. On this present occasion, one of these precious three was away on leave, and the two others were ill with fever, so after early tea, the Appu appeared in the sitting-room with a very long face to say, "Please sir, there is no kitchen cooly to-day." However, Rob soon settled the matter by pressing into the service an orphan boy whom he keeps to look after the dogs and poultry. But the more important problem of who is to fetch our supplies to-morrow still remains unsolved. It behoves housekeepers on remote Estates to lay in a stock of tinned provisions in order to provide for emergencies. It is wonderful what appetising dishes can be made from them by the Ceylon cooks; indeed, in the absence of kitchen ranges, and modern utensils, all their cooking is perfectly marvellous. Here we have not even a proper oven; only a fire on the hearth, and a clay oven improvised to cook the Christmas turkey; and yet some of the entrées, and the scones and hot cakes our "boy" sends up would do credit to a pupil of the Kensington School of Cookery. I am so struck dumb with admiration that I feel quite shy of making any culinary suggestions. The native cooks are also artistic in their work: stewed fruit, for example, is sent up covered with a most delicate tracery of white whip; iced cakes are perfect marvels of elegant decoration;

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COCOA PODS CLOSED AND OPEN. Plate IV.

cucumber appears with scalloped edges, and mashed potato is often moulded into the form of a fantailed pigeon, or takes the semblance of one huge potato—even the angularities and depressions are copied, and so complete is the deception, that the first time this dish was handed to me I exclaimed (much to the amusement of the company) "Oh what an enormous potato! I think it is the largest I have ever seen." The cooks seem to have a real love of their art. Our "boy" is at this moment revelling in Miss Young's "Domestic Cookery." He can read just enough English to make out the recipes, which are very clearly and simply expressed. He generally manages to carry them out correctly; but one day it was a little perplexing to have "Exeter Stew" sent up with what ought to have been suet balls, made into a pudding paste, whilst inside it reposed the meat made into balls, thus reversing the usual process. We benefit by his experiments, though I much fear that a box of stores, which I have just had up from Colombo, will in consequence come to an end much sooner than I expected.

February 2nd.—Last night Rob and I were going for our usual evening walk, when an enormous buffalo rushed through the cocoa close to us. Then began an amusing chase, Rob put five coolies on his track, and after

about an hour, they brought the beast tied with ropes, in triumph to the bungalow. Then as usual the Arachi was sent for, and this morning it has been marched off to the nearest Court House, there to await identification, or failing that, to be sold, the Estate exacting a fine of ten rupees. These great lumbering animals do incalculable harm to the young cocoa plants, so war is perpetually being waged against their incursions. They belong in the main to neighbouring villagers, who use them for ploughing their paddy (rice) fields; but as we have on one side a good deal of unoccupied jungle, probably some of the buffaloes may really be wild and unowned. This particular animal had a magnificent pair of horns which I longed to annex for the walls of our little sitting-room.

The episode of the buffalo had no sooner ended than a cooly came to announce the birth of his little son, and to ask for the usual present on such occasions of two rupees. As I mentioned elsewhere in the case of both births and deaths the Ceylon Government requires the superintendent of an Estate to make a notification of the same at his earliest convenience on a printed form, containing a number of questions such as (in case of a birth):—Names of father and mother—nationality—whether they are married—date of birth,

sex and name of infant, etc., etc. It is quite right that it should be so, considering that coolies are foreign emigrants, isolated from their own friends, and very much at the mercy of their employers. Their existence should be safely guarded in every possible way by the State.

To-day I saw in the tool store a delightful implement of husbandry, which I wish we had in our English gardens. It is called a transplanter and is used for transplanting young tea, coffee, and cocoa plants. It is difficult to describe, but I will try to do so. Imagine, then, an iron cylinder about three inches in diameter, and fifteen inches long; a light iron rod bent square at the top is attached to each side of the cylinder thus forming a handle. When a plant has to be moved it is first heavily watered, then the cylinder is put over it and driven into the ground its entire length, With a hoist of the hand the plant is uprooted and raised with a ball of earth attached. Then comes the second part of the process. When the young plant has been taken to its destination, it is forced out by the lower end of its iron receptacle being placed over a wooden block which exactly fits it. As this fills the cylinder the plant and its ball of earth are forced out without any of the roots being injured. How useful a small transplanter would be in a kitchen garden, to move lettuce, and cabbage

and indeed all vegetables and flowers that want thinning.

To go to a domestic detail, I have been very busy this morning in converting a pair of strong boots into walking shoes, by cutting the uppers away to the fourth button, and then binding the shoe. Boots are far too hot to wear, and the roads are so rough and stony (at all events on Raneetotem) that the destruction to shoes is terrible. I have worn out two pairs in a month. When the nearest shoemaker is sixteen miles away one has to set one's wits to work, and I feel quite proud of my success as a disciple of St. Crispin.

My kitchen garden is proceeding apace, it is a plot of ground of about 20 ft by 30 ft—fenced in by a rough pallisade of rubber branches; across this, bamboo battens are tied with a kind of creeper called "jungle rope," and then branches and twigs are inserted and interlaced. Cut boughs of rubber have a knack of sprouting, so we hope these may do so, and make the place a little less ugly. The gate is of a very primitive kind, but answers its purpose well—two uprights of bamboo with little cross-pieces tied to it in the form of a ladder. I intend sowing English seeds, cabbage, lettuce, radishes, beans, carrots, turnips, tomatoes, &c., also some good melons and cucumbers, and—I feel rather shy of

mentioning it, as I have been so much laughed at—egg plant, which it seems is only another name for the bringal, which grows almost wild in Ceylon, but which a London seedsman gave me as a rarity likely to do well in a tropical climate. N.B.—I would say to people coming to Ceylon—Don't bring Bringals, for it is carrying coals to Newcastle, and you will be unmercifully chaffed.

FEBUARY. 7th.—The kitchen garden is going on well, we have mustard and cress, radishes and lettuces, already beginning to show themselves. The locale of Jack and the Beanstalk must surely have been in Ceylon; for in no other country have I seen seeds grow so quickly into plants. Both beans and cucumbers made an appearance in three days. The garden wants a good deal of watering, and all the water has to be brought from a neighbouring well in a cask on wheels drawn by a small black bull.

As I pass this well in the late afternoon, and see its protecting circle of masonry, its canopy of overhanging roof, and the Eastern women hastening after work to take their turn in drawing up water to cook their evening meal; it takes me back to the old Bible stories, and makes living realities of Rachel and Rebecca, and the woman of Samaria, such as they never were to me before.

Though plant life is exuberant in this climate, its enemies are many, cocoanut palms, cocoa, and coffee have each a special insect, (to say nothing of fungus) that makes them its prey. At muster the other evening, one man came up to Rob holding a curious string of something in his hand, reminding me much of the grass strings of wild strawberries of my early days. On nearer inspection these proved to be a kind of red and black beetle about half an inch long, having a sharp proboscis with which it bores into, and through the soft pith of the young cocoanut palms, and eventually kills the tree, unless it is discovered and eradicated in time. At intervals skilled coolies are told off to search for cocoanut "poochies;" when caught they string the beetles and also the larvœ, on a thick bit of grass and bring them to muster to shew how many have really been caught. In this case-seventy eight beetles had been cut out and impaled by one man, and this was thought a good day's work.

We have had a great excitement. One of the dogs was suddenly found to be mad. It had for some days shewn signs of extreme irritability, and made night hideous by its howls and yells, at last it became unmistakably mad, and Rob shot it, first having a very narrow escape of being bitten, as the animal flew at his wrist, fortunately he was wearing his wristband

unbuttoned, and the dog seized the wristband instead of the wrist, biting it through and through. He was beaten off, and in two minutes more had ceased to exist. This dog had sometime ago, had an abcess in the ear which we thought was cured, but now believe to have been the cause of the outbreak. Rob has given orders that the other dogs should always be tied up during the hottest hours of the day, and should have an unlimited supply of drinking water.

No account of Ceylon daily life would be true without a description of a day, such as the one we are now passing. A most uncomfortable day it is. Our small world is in decidedly low spirits. The Appu, because he has so little food to cook,—the Master, because he has so little food to eat, and I because I feel somehow or other I ought to have provided against this contingency. The fact is that yesterday our whole meat supply was found to have gone bad. Picture to yourself that we are sixteen weary miles from a shop. Thirty two miles for the coolie to walk before he can bring our provisions back, that for some hours the meat has to be carried in a tin box under a tropical sun. Also that it is useless sending again before to-morrow, as the butchers only kill twice a week, then you will have some idea of the situation. I fear, now that the hot

weather has begun, our week will consist of a series of alternate feasts and fasts. The alternative is to keep more poultry, and a large stock of tinned provisions, but alas! tinned provisions are extremely expensive, and this is one of the reasons why so many young men find themselves in debt. To show you the ingenuity of our cook. I will give you to-day's breakfast and dinner menu. At twelve o'clock breakfast we had, eggs and bacon, and macaroni dressed with cheese and tomato sauce. Australian lambs' tongues, and a vegetable curry, which together with hot scones, apricot jam and butter made a very appetising meal. The dinner menu consisted of soup (a la Packet) boiled lulu fish with anchovy sauce, roast duck, and custard pudding. The lulu was an unexpected addition, it was caught in our own dam the same afternoon and was truly welcome.

Now all this uncertainty and discomfort, and the long journey to Kandy would be quite unnecessary if only there were a little more enterprise in the community. Only five miles away is a small township containing a post office, a Rest-House, a blacksmith, a doctor, and a hospital, but no beef-shop. Will it be believed, it is the postal depot of a large planting district where the planters absolutely have to send twenty and twenty-five miles to Kandy for their meat?

When I exclaimed at this state of things, I was met by the answer; "Oh there was a butcher once, but he kept such bad meat that we preferred to send to Kandy." It never seemed to dawn upon them that where one butcher had failed another, with more capital, might succeed. I am much too unimportant an individual, and too much a bird of passage to inaugurate reforms, but this is a reform ready to the hand of a suitable person. The universal motto in Celyon (barring the planting industry in which progress does find a place) seems to be "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be." In some ways, this conservatism adds to the quaintness and interest of the country; but where it touches the details of domestic life it does make a western mind "squirm." Forgive this mood of dissatisfaction, it is all the result of "Banian" day, and the infectious low spirits of my companions.

February 8th.—For some years the sluice of the dam had been out of order and so jammed that it would not open; in consequence the water became covered with duckweed, which together with the stagnant mud festering under a hot sun, had lately sent out such a horrid smell, that it became absolutely necessary for the general health to let out the water, and clean out the mud and weed, without a moment's delay. So yesterday Rob gave orders that this should be done, but it proved a more serious undertaking

than was at first expected,as owing to the depth of water it was necessary to have divers to go down and examine the injury to the sluice and to try to open it. In spite of the noxious odour and the dirty water three men took it in turns to dive, and after some hours, the obstruction was very gradually removed by their efforts, and at last the sluice worked again, and the water rushed out. Great was the excitement and delight of these child-like creatures, who love anything new and unusual. With shouts of joy, the boys, and even one girl, rushed into the mud, to be followed as soon as work was over by the bulk of the men. How they all paddled about! dashing the mud and water over each other's heads, catching the fish (which to everyone's surprise were found there) in their baskets and even in their hands. No London mudlarks could have been more at home. Not only were there fish, but also land turtle of various sizes. None of them however very large. I seized upon a few for the sake of their shells, but they were useless for food, not being of an edible kind. I believe, however, there are four different kinds of marine turtle to be obtained on the coast of Ceylon. I tried to preserve the brightness of the shell of those taken out of the dam, but I found they all became dull and ugly, and so my visions of using them for ornamental purposes melted away into thin air.

CHAPTER V

MARCH 10th.— A long time has passed since I last wrote in my journal. An attack of fever necessitated my going for change of air to the higher country, and I had the great delight of an utterly new experience, namely being carried four miles almost straight up hill in a chair, the poles thereof resting on the shoulders of four coolies. It was an experience. To begin with, I am by no means a light weight, and one of the four coolies was such a short, slight, weak looking little man, that I felt very much as if I ought to carry him, and not he me; the difference in height between him and the others gave the chair a lurching, as well as a swinging movement. Sometimes, my little friend put the pole on his head instead of his shoulder, and then we got on better; but at the most critical moments he had a tendency to totter, which kept one on the "qui vive." In returning, I had four men of the same height, and it made a wonderful difference in my comfort. The chair was of

light cane, with a head well thatched with palm leaves. It was much after the pattern of the old sedan chair, excepting that it was open instead of being closed in. The road by which we went, was simply a mountain path, leading first through groves of palms, the gigantic white plumes of the blossom of the talipot palm outtopping all others ; then we went through paddy fields, forded an unbridged river where I expected momentarily to be deposited in the water, and then up the side of a mountain gorge, where huge boulders encroached on the already narrow pathway, on the lower side of which, without the slightest parapet, was a precipice of several hundred feet. One false step and, for me, there would have been an end of all things. But the false step never comes, the native with his bare feet, and prehensile toes is as surefooted as a goat or a monkey.

At last we arrived at our destination, a bungalow literally covered with Cape jessamine, bougainvillea, thumbergia and other lovely creepers, built on a small plateau overhanging the gorge. Every inch of plateau has been turned into garden, or ornamental shrubbery, and in the cooler mountain air many English flowers and vegetables flourished that would pine and die in the hot low country. One hears the distant roar of the mountain torrent which works the machinery of the tea factory below,

and what with the crisp air, the rush of water, and the English flowers, one could almost imagine oneself in some remote Highland shooting lodge. Inside, the bungalow was very homelike and cosy. Carpets, piano, harmonium, lovely china, glass, and silver, and above all, loads of books and magazines, left one nothing to wish for. It was a perpetual mystery to me how all these things could have been brought to their present abiding place. On enquiry, my host told me that the piano had taken twenty-two men eleven hours to bring it the last four miles. Stranger than all, it arrived in good tune, which speaks well for ironstrung instruments. I should like to describe my walks about this mountain eerie, the giant stags' horn moss, and lilac rock cistus that I picked, my visit to the factory and the various processes of tea growing and tea making, but as Rudyard Kipling says, "That is another story." The cool bracing air soon drove the fever fiend away, and I returned home as well as ever.

Some time ago a cooly ran away from Raneetotem and hid himself on a neighbouring Estate, owned by a native. He had behaved badly to his Kangany here, who had quite properly punished him, and he persuaded the owner of the place he fled to that he was afraid of ill-treatment if he returned ; so when

a man went to fetch him they declined to give him up, and in fact hid him away. After about six weeks of parley, Rob got a warrant for his arrest—a run-away cooly can always be arrested if less than sixty days' pay is due. The policeman brought him here to be identified by Rob, and the Kangany. I shall never forget the scene I overheard in the verandah. Such a jabbering in Tamil and English, for the native policeman seemed to think it more dignified to talk in broken English. The poor prisoner was handcuffed, and dreadfully ashamed of appearing thus on his own Estate. Rob at once ordered the handcuffs off, saying he himself would be responsible for his safe keeping, then he addressed the man very seriously. He and the Kangany made him take a "Saami" oath that he would not run away again, which he did, prostrated on the ground, clasping his Master's feet. After a great deal more jabbering and vociferating from the policeman, and the Kangany, he was taken off to the police station there to await the sitting of the court, two days later. He is now back here, friends with everyone, and working splendidly. A "Saami" oath is so binding amongst the Tamils that no one seems to be afraid of his breaking it. On his return from Court he again prostrated himself at Rob's feet begging for forgiveness.

A curious example of Tamil marriage customs has just come to my notice. About three weeks ago, our kitchen cooly asked for leave to go to the "burying" of his brother—one Muni Andi of Hanikawelle. Rob remarked to me, "You will see he will marry his brother's wife." Sure enough, last Saturday he reappeared having married the widow, who accompanied him, also her two children. This is thought strictly proper and correct in Tamil circles. Also a girl may, and often does, marry her mother's brother; but it would be thought quite improper for her to marry her father's brother. In the reverse way a young man may marry his father's sister, but he must not marry his maternal aunt. The Kanganys are particular who their daughters marry, and our head Kangany is just going to take his daughter, a very pretty girl of about sixteen or seventeen, to India to be married, because he says there is no one suitable about here. Some of the young girls are particularly graceful and pretty, but they go off very quickly, and women of thirty look quite haggard and old. Indeed both men and women look at their last stage of decrepitude at the age of sixty.

The "Ceylon Standard," the recognised organ of educated native opinion, has lately contained several letters and paragraphs relating to a change in Sinhalese marriage

customs, which they call the dowry system. These letters show such an extraordinary divergence from the western mode of thought that I am tempted to quote (the italics are my own). The whole gist of complaint is that within the last fifty years the custom has come in of the father being expected to portion his daughter, instead of the bridegroom giving a dowry to the father. To quote from the letter in the "Standard":—

"It has now become the fashion among certain "classes of the Sinhalese, to make the fitness of the "partner one chooses for life, entirely a question of "money. A dowry Rs1000 (£70 *at present rate of* "*exchange*) is what a person who is fairly well off is "expected to give a daughter. A dowry of Rs100 "(£7) is what a domestic servant or a day-labourer is "expected to give. Generally amongst the lowest "classes dowries range between Rs100, and Rs200, "and amongst the next higher classes it mounts up "to a Rs1000 or Rs2000 or Rs3000 and so on. "Among the lower classes it is considered a point of "etiquette to ask for dowry. Matters have reached "such a point that now it is a great calamity to a "man to be blessed with a few daughters. In the "natural course of things people will be obliged to "consider their daughters a curse to their families. "Besides all this, landed property must eventually "become the exclusive possession of the wealthy. "The middle class is threatened with extinction. "The dowry system is not quite fifty years old. The "dowry system which prevailed in the East from

CUTTING THE PODS OPEN AND EXTRACTING THE BEANS.

COCOA PICKERS.

Plate V.

"almost time out of mind like many an Eastern "institution which has been discarded was the reverse "of the present detestable system. That system "required the bridegroom to give a dowry to the "parents of the bride, instead of securing a dowry from "them. Traces of this custom are to be found in the "Bible, and in many sacred books of the East. But "sad to say old times are changed, old manners gone. "This practice of dowry seeking which is the result of "the lowest forms of selfishness is certainly not a sign "of the advance of civilization, but rather it is just the "reverse. It is an evil which threatens to *subvert* "*Sinhalese Society*, and to introduce misery and discon-"tent in place of happiness and contentment. This is "a subject which should be taken up by the press and "the pulpit. The system I have already referred to, "virtually *degrades women to a low level*, in spite of "the rapid advance which has been made in recent "years in the higher education of females," and so on, and so on.

To our European minds it is much more degrading to a woman to be bought by her future husband for so much gold, or so many acres of land, or so many head of cattle, than that the father, to whom she owes her existence, should in his lifetime provide for her comfort, and give her for immediate use some of the worldly goods, which with his other children, she has an equitable right to inherit after his death. But as Rudyard Kipling so truly says :—

"Oh East is East, and West is West, and never the
twain shall meet,
Till earth and sky stand presently at God's great
judgment seat."

This afternoon, flights of white butterflies passed over the bungalow. For several hours we watched them, as they winged their way from south east to north west, sometimes in twos, and threes, sometimes in quite a cloud. I am told that this occurs every year when the N.E. monsoon is dying away, and for some weeks before the S.W. monsoon breaks. The poor butterflies fly across the island right out to sea, and there perish. Mr. Darwin in his "Voyage of the Beagle" speaks of a similiar phenomenon in South America. Miss Gordon Cumming, also, in her "Two happy years in Ceylon" mentions similar flights of butterflies in November and December during the setting in of the north east monsoon, but in most of the instances she quotes, the butterflies were a dark colour and yellow, while so far, all the swarms we have seen have been pure white. There is a curious superstition amongst the natives of Ceylon that in flying over Adam's Peak they change their colour.

March 12th.—Again the butterflies are passing but not in such great numbers as yesterday. We see hardly any until about one o'clock in the day. I went this morning to look at a part of

the Estate where the coffee is in full blossom, and a most lovely sight it is. Coffee branches grow laterally, and all along them are white waxy flowers like jessamine, growing so thickly that each branch looks like a white wand. Imagine tier above tier of these branches against the background of glossy green leaves, something like Portugal laurel. Some of the trees are not only in blossom but at the same time are loaded with the red and the green berries (here called "cherry") of the ripe, and the unripe coffee. The scent of the blossom is almost overpowering, and reminded me of a mixture of orange blossom, and paregoric and squills, if such a scent can be imagined.

Our kitchen garden has proved a success, and we feel proud to cut our own lettuces, radishes, and mustard and cress and bye and bye look forward to peas, beans, carrots, turnips, cucumbers and melons, which all promise well. I have also planted a croton hedge, and have put down a number of rose cuttings so I hope later on literally to make "the wilderness blossom as the rose."

MARCH 14th.—The beauty of the coffee blossom has already passed, and now we are almost praying to have no rain for a few days that the blossom may set. This morning I discovered a new and perfectly unexpectedly beautiful walk.

I followed a very commonplace looking path, which I pass almost daily, and it led me into a most lovely gorge, something like an Isle of Wight chine. The path clings to the precipitous side, but below a stream meanders, sometimes through groves of broad leaved plantains and huge feathery ferns, at others precipitates itself over granite boulders. The banks are lined with cocoa, coffee and cocoanut palms, whilst beyond where the gorge opens out into the valley, one catches glimpses of the Rangalla mountains—sapphire blue in the early morning light. In this sunless spot, damp and dark with dense folliage, I positively shivered with cold, and was glad of a warm wrap, whilst on the higher ground the thermometer was standing 70 degrees in the shade. The entrance is only a stone throw from our store, so I shall often go there, if only for the sensation of feeling cool, but shall always first take the precaution of swallowing a quinine five grain tabloid, for here chill inevitably means fever.

March 16th.—I have just been with Rob on his round of work. He first visited the "poochee" men. Poochee is the generic Ceylon name for pestilent insects, and truly their name is legion. Cocoa has one destructive poochee, coffee another, and cocoanut palms a third. A number of coolies are told off to go the round of the Estate, field by field, to eradicate

them. It is very pretty to see their agile way of springing up the branches, and deftly tapping the tree to see if it has been attacked; if it has, they cut out the offending insect with a sharp scimitar shaped blade, placing it in a piece of hollow bamboo which they carry with them suspended by a string. The trees are all planted in lines, each man takes two lines, and not only eradicates the poochees, but cuts off all the dead branches, stacks and burns dead cocoa trees, and lops off the unecessary cocoa suckers. In these days of disease, if there should happen to be suckers at the bottom, one is usually left, in order to give the tree a chance of growing up from the root.

Weeding coolies also go round the Estate, field by field, in the same systematic order. Their duty is to weed, stack dead timber, clean and clear the drains, and sweep the paths and roads. When there is no crop to be picked, the women are much employed for weeding. If the coolies, and especially the watchmen, find any ripe fruit, they are supposed to bring it to the bungalow, though most superintendents are quite willing they should have the surplus. It not only pleases them, but keeps them in health, for it has been found that their rice diet requires a vegetable corrective, and where coolies have been forbidden fruit and deprived of kitchen gardens,

there, fever has been much more prevalent. I know of one case where this happened, afterwards a new Manager restored the gardens, and fever declined in proportionate ratio. The fruits we have here in greatest abundance are limes, almonds, pine-apples, mangoes and pawpaws. The last most valuable as a digestive, on account of the quantity of vegetable pepsine it contains. Much has lately been written on this subject, and it is not unlikely that before long, the pepsine extracted from pawpaws, which are plentiful, may become one of the minor exports of Ceylon.

When I returned to the bungalow, one of the servants met me with the extraordinary statement that "the pigeons wanted buttons." The mystery was soon solved by his appearing with an armful of pyjamas. This boy's English is of the drollest. Another day he came and stood behind me, as they always do, waiting for you first to address them, if you take no notice they give a gentle cough to call your attention. On my enquiring what he wanted, he said, 'Please, lady, I want a steam.' This was a puzzle. At last after many ineffectual attempts to understand, he brought me a letter, and showed me the stamp as being what he wanted.

MARCH 22nd.—Yesterday I made a desperate attempt to get a view of the river. The

Mahavillagange, the most important and the longest river in Ceylon, is one of the boundaries of this Estate, and yet, would you believe it? such is the thickness of the jungle, and the under-growth of gigantic course grass, a belt of which divides the cocoa from the river, that nowhere can I get down to the water's edge, or even in sight of it, although I have been so near, that I could absolutely hear the ripple of the stream. In the early morning, and at sunset, which are the only possible times for walking exercise, malaria haunts the lower ground, especially in the neighbourhood of water; but yesterday was peculiarly dry and clear, so I thought I would venture. Knowing I could not accomplish my object on Raneetotem I tried a very promising looking path on the next estate. Down and down it zigzagged till I was evidently almost on a level with the river, which just there runs through a very narrow wooded gorge; but not a glimpse could I get, even though I climbed up a boulder. Still the beautiful but tiresome belt of jungle intervened. However I did not regret my walk, for I came suddenly upon a clearing, which presented to me a new, and curious sight; three terraces on which thousands of cocoanuts were laid close together; out of the middle of a hundred or so, young cocoanut palms were growing. When these nuts are exposed to the weather they

become grey, and lose the brown shade we are accustomed to see, and at the first glance, and in the distance I thought for a moment they were skulls, and that I might have come upon some weird scene of devil worship; but a moment's consideration showed me that it was the cocoanut nursery, looking very cool and picturesque with its surroundings of plantain trees and yams. A caretaker is very necessary, for I am told there is nothing more tempting to the natives than to steal cocoanuts out of a freshly made nursery. In this place fifty were stolen in one night.

Growing cocoanuts is a very paying business. After the first seven years they require scarcely any cultivation. They are enriched by grazing tethered cattle under their shade. A tree in full bearing is supposed to produce forty nuts. These can be sold for six cents each; or if you prefer a still easier plan, each tree can be leased for a rupee. I am of course speaking now of those that are grown amongst other products. On the large low country cocoanut estates, which belong principally to burghers or to natives, everything is done on a large scale, and money made from many products of the same tree. The natives in Dumbera grow them a good deal with bananas planted between. I call them bananas, having been accustomed to the tree in Queensland, where

the good sorts are so called, but here it is a dire offence, and I am continually corrected and told to say plantain.

This reminds me of another mistake which all newcomers are apt to make, namely to speak of a tea, or a coffee Plantation. This is a terrible solecism. Here in Ceylon one must speak of Estates,—a tea Estate, a coffee Estate, and so on. In India they are called Gardens, and in the West Indies Plantations. Each country has its own little nomenclature, and it is amusing of what importance they think it.

"If only I were a botanist!" is my constant lament and especially to-day for I have found a (to me) new flower. It has something of the form and quite the scent of a white azalea, only the flower has four distinct petals, the upper ones marked with blotches, some maroon and some yellow, quantities of long white stamens, leaves rather like a large myrtle, a woody stem with thorns. It grows on a low bush, and is not common about here. I have only found two specimens, one on a hill, the other on ground near a river; the one from the upper ground having much smaller and more glossy leaves than the other. To understand one's excitement and delight over finding some new natural object, you must have experienced what it is to live an isolated life. I am often reminded

of a remark made by the little Swiss maid at a pension at Villars where I was once staying. I said something to her about the cows, and how pretty and cheerful their bells sounded. She answered, "Oui, Madame, les vaches sont la distraction des montagnes!" (The cows are the entertainment of the mountains). Dogs, and flowers, and sunsets, and cloud effects are our entertainments at Raneetotem.

CHAPTER VI

THE weather is getting very hot in the daytime, but the nights are generally pleasantly cool. The thermometer all last week stood close upon ninety degrees in the shade and draught of our verandah. I find the best way not to feel the heat is to keep oneself constantly employed with writing, reading, or needlework. The difficulty is to get enough books. Friends are kind in lending them to one another, and a new work or magazine often goes the round of a whole district. Our great standby is the "Book Tambi," who is a sort of circulating library in himself. He and his attendant go from house to house with a bundle of books, some extremely uninteresting, but there are always others to be found one has not read before, and often very good novels issued in the "Home and Colonial Series." A man who buys new books and soon gets tired of them is a perfect boon to a district. Such a one we had, but he lately brought out a bride from

England, and to our great disappointment, when the Tambi last paid us a visit and we asked for some of G— Dorei's books, he gave a broad grin and said the new Dorei Sani (lady) would not let him sell any. We can only truly and devoutly hope that when she has read and re-read her library, and the novelty of the surroundings has worn off, that she may want some new books. The terms for the transaction are an old book and sixpence, which is certainly not an exhorbitant sum. I would strongly advise any new-comers not to leave behind them the books they brought for the voyage. Never mind how trashy they may be, you will find them appreciated even if only for the purpose of exchange. I have even seen old lesson books in the bookman's bundle, and constantly, I am sorry to say religious books of an antiquated school. There are "Tambi's" with all kinds of merchandise, but the most useful is the man who brings calicos, prints, towels, and sheets. Khaki, flannel shirts, flannel suiting, Cannanore cloth, needles, pins, buttons, tape, ready-made coats (as worn by Kanganys) Dhurris, and other useful odds and ends. This arrival is quite an event both in the lines and at the bungalow. First comes the Tambi, usually a Moorman in a fez, short coat, and coloured cloth put on like a petticoat, and always grasping a huge black cotton

umbrella, behind him, three or four youths with bundles on their heads, each bundle being covered by a large piece of talipot palmleaf to keep off sun and rain. They stand in battle array in front of the verandah, are told to let us see what they have got, and then begins a regular battle over prices. The Tambis invariably ask twice the proper price at the beginning, and lower by very slow degrees. The best way to bargain with them is to offer exactly half what they ask, and then gradually go up a little until you see by their expression that they begin to look pleased. This sort of conversation usually occurs. "Tambi, how much will you take for that cloth." N.B.—Calico always called cloth in Ceylon.

"Seventy-five cents a yard, lady."

"Oh, I could not think of giving you more than forty cents."

"No, lady. Can't take it. This cloth cost me fifty cents. I am very poor man, and can't lose money. No lady, can't take it."

"I very poor too, Tambi, can't give more than forty cents."

She goes away.

The Appu comes and tells her he has just bought a quantity from the very same piece for thirty cents. She returns, and tells the gentleman who is also bargaining for some khaki. He flies out on the Tambi.

"You are a very bad man. How dare you cheat the lady. You have just sold the same to my Appu for thirty cents, and you ask the lady for seventy-five cents. Boy (turning to the Appu) tell him he is a cheat, and a swindler, and he is never to come here again."

The man seems quite impervious to these little amenities, but smiles sweetly, and says, "The lady can have it for thirty cents." After this, business proceeds on a more satisfactory footing, everybody makes good the deficiencies in his or her wardrobe, and the Tambi leaves, you may be sure, not having got the worst of the encounter.

MARCH—24th. To-day our head Kangany, by name Cuitlingen, starts for the Indian coast with his very pretty daughter, in search of a husband. He has heard of a possible one, and goes himself to see if he is suitable, if not, she is to be brought back again, and married here. The poor girl is quite in good spirits, and looked very bright and cheerful when she came to say good-bye, and she told Rob she would get her husband to bring her back here to live. As she knows no English I was not able to speak to her, much to my regret. A little brother accompanies her who is to be left in India. The father came to Raneetotem from India, when quite a little child, in the old coffee days, and has

lived here ever since, and is therefore a very valuable help to the superintendent. In spite of his very good wages, and the head money of a large gang of coolies, his wife goes out cocoa and coffee picking, but the daughter has never been allowed to work in the field. The wife is usually distinguished by a profusion of handsome gold jewellery, earrings, nose-ring, bracelets, anklets, and necklaces. We gave the bride a present of ten rupees, which seemed to give great satisfaction. I cannot help feeling sincere pity for the poor ignorant child going to face a new world, and to marry a man she has never seen, and who may prove a most undesirable husband.

On returning last night from my evening walk, I saw Rob standing outside the bungalow, laying down the law, surrounded by a number of angry men, all gesticulating at once, whilst the servants were peeping round the kitchen, craning their necks to see what was going on. I am by this time too much accustomed to scenes to be frightened, so went into the bungalow another way, and waited to hear the story. It was this—one of our coolies protested he had been attacked by the "Arachi" of a neighbouring village, had been beaten and had had his earrings stolen. The "Arachi" on the contrary

declared the man was drunk, and had a row with a Sinhalese man about a deer, and that the Sinhalese took the earrings. Both men came up here to Rob to complain. As they not only contradicted each other, but also themselves over and over again he told them they must come next day with witnesses. Probably we shall hear no more about the affair for these rows subside in a wonderful way. When natives have blown off steam by a good deal of vociferation and gesticulation, and complained to their Master, they seem content to let mattters drop, and in a few days we find them, and their quondam enemies the greatest of friends. We felt anxious to know the truth in this particular instance; for if the man was really waylaid in a spot which our Tapal (post) cooly passes every day, it would be a serious matter. Sometimes even the government post runners are attacked. Not long ago there was a case of the kind between Kandy and Teldeniya, The postman was waylaid and beaten, and the mail stolen from him. Now two men go together with the night mail between those places, and very curious objects they look, each carrying a long spear with a bell attached,—the bell to clear the way, the spear a relic of the days (not so far distant) when they required a weapon against wild

animals especially elephants, who infested the wayside jungle. Their clothes are tucked up as high as decency will allow, so that no artificial impediment may interfere with their speed. And really it is wonderful with what regularity they perform their daily task.

26th.—The bookman has repeated his visit very quickly this time, but he had nothing very new, or interesting. Certain books appear over and over again; such as "Vanity Fair," "Pickwick" and some of Charles Reade's, also "Midshipman Easy," and books of Mayne Reid's. However, we managed to get a story by John Strange Winter, and another by Florence Warden, and as we gave two new books of a new edition, had only to pay a few cents for the exchange.

To-day another most useful itinerant has turned up. A chair-mender. He brings with him a bundle of cane, sits down in the verandah, and in a trice all your chairs are mended. It is quite wonderful with what dexterity and deftness he plies the cane backwards and forwards, doing his work with the utmost neatness and exactitude. He reseated two chairs for seventy-five cents, which, considering the distance he has to come to this out-of-the-way Estate, no one can think exorbitant.

This morning finds me the fortunate possessor of a pair of very fine Minorca fowls, won in a raffle which a lady got up to help a poor widow in Kandy. The cock and hen have just arrived, and there has already been a skirmish between our own Minorca cock and the newcomer. With the result that the homebird had an easy victory. We find Minorcas a very useful kind of poultry to keep, they are hardy, good layers, and produce fine large eggs. Raffles are frequent in Ceylon, and I have known two different people who have been fortunate enough to win a carriage and horse. I suppose the love of chance is engrained in the English character, for even I must plead guilty to finding great pleasure in winning a raffle.

Amongst our pets has long been a small Wanderoo monkey. The poor little thing was so timid that she never seemed particularly happy. Therefore, on hearing that a native had a monkey for sale I determined to buy her a companion. Jacko duly appeared. Such a grotesquely human-looking little beast. In one ear he wears a gold earring; and earring and all only cost five rupees. At first he was very shy and made us all shriek with laughter at the way he put a sack over his head like a shawl, wrapping it round him just like any old woman. He is now getting a

little more accustomed to us. I have just shown him himself in a hand looking glass, which seemed to perplex him considerably. Our original monkey eats toast and bread, but Jacko will take nothing but boiled rice, which he demolishes in a very vulgar way—filling his mouth and the pouch at the side of his cheek over full and then giving the pouch a great slap with his hand, just as you sometimes see little children blow out their cheeks and then slap them to make a noise. They both like oranges, and deftly pick out the pips, which they eat first, evidently thinking them the "bonne bouche," then with their hand they tear the inside pulp to pieces eating it with great gusto. Of course the orange has to be cut in half, as the whole would be too large for their little hands to manipulate. Sometimes, I give them a plantain, and it is quite a pretty sight to see the neat way in which they peel the fruit before eating it. The little monkey seems much happier now she has a companion. Occasionally they sit on the ground side by side, with their arms interlaced round each others neck, just like a pair of affectionate school girls.

March 28th.—Everyone that can be spared from other work is now busy rubbering. We have only "Ceara" rubber, which is not quite so valuable as the "Para" species; but

even this fetches a remunerative price. The rubbering season commences when the tree is leafless. For some weeks large yellow rubber leaves, and the red tint of the almond trees, have given an autumnal glow to the woods, but now the rubbers stretch their great limbs leafless to the view, and the tapping has commenced. Rubber is a milky sap lying between the inner bark and the wood. The process consists of first taking off a yard or so of outer bark, then making incisions in the inner bark from which the milky sap slowly oozes. Just below the foot of these incisions a little piece of bark is lifted and a frond of cocoanut palm is inserted into the slit, which acts as a trough down which the rubber runs into a cocoanut shell below. Every half hour, or so, the men go round to empty the shells, if full, into a large earthen chatty, and to cut each incision a little larger so that the flow may continue, otherwise it quickly dries up. Rubber will not run during the great heat of the day, so the coolies commence work at day-break, knock off at 11 a.m., begin again at 3 p.m. till 5 o'clock. When, having first washed it, they bring their collection of rubber to the store to be weighed. Each cooly collects daily from 3 to 5 lbs. and it is work of which they are extremely fond.

The rubber sap is at once put into shallow earthen chatties. When sufficiently coagulated, acetic acid being sometimes added to hasten the process, the mass is turned out, all the moisture pressed out by rolling, then dried in the sun. When finished the flat semi-transparent discs form the "rubber biscuits," of commerce.

The white mass, as it is turned out of the chatties, where it has partly solidified looks like a quaking mould of most tempting blanc-mange or lemon sponge. Healthy trees, where the bark has healed, can be tapped year after year, but each season many die under the process. Some years ago, it was thought that "Ceara," rubber trees would form a good shade for cocoa, and accordingly many were planted on the various cocoa Estates, but it was found to be rather injurious than otherwise, for during the hottest time of the year, when cocoa requires shade most, the rubber trees are bare and in monsoon time the foliage is so dense; that it gives the undergrowth no chance of getting the little sunshine that there is. Pneumatic tyres have given quite a fillip to rubber culture. The rumour of the invention of a rubber separator, which should minimise the cost of production, makes the Ceylon planter watch for developments. It is probable that in the future, rubber may become a very

valuable article of export. Several kinds, including Para and Castilloa are being planted in the island.

April 22nd.—The little monsoon is now upon us. From time to time we have clouds which veil the scorching sun, and often the evening brings us refreshing thunder showers. No one who has not lived in the Tropics can imagine the delight with which we hail the rumble of distant thunder, and the eagerness with which we watch the course of the storm lest, (as is sometimes the case) it should move round in a distant circuit, leaving us rainless in the centre. I have known rain fall heavily within a mile on both sides of us, leaving Raneetotem high and dry, with barely a few drops of the coveted moisture. At this time of year we exist all day in the sweltering heat dripping from every pore. Rob in the field is occupied with his work, and has to drag his dripping weary limbs about thinking as little as possible about the heat. Whilst to me, sitting alone in the bungalow, the day seems interminable. I cannot write or do any needlework, on account of the swarms of minute eyeflies which are continually making a dash at my eyes, so I have to read as much as I can, with a book in one hand, and a fan in the other, and when I can read no longer, I meditate. Needless to say my meditations do not take a

cheerful tone. Even the flowers and the pot plants droop in the sultry air, and the dogs lie stretched out on the earthen floor of the verandah with scarcely a wag of the tail left in them. At last—the clock strikes four—a slight breeze springs up, clouds are banked high in two directions. The skirmishers of the S.W. monsoon meet the nearly exhausted forces of the N.E. peals of thunder, like a discharge of artillery reverberate from mountain to mountain, flashes of the most vivid forked and chain lightning cleave the black clouds, then comes the deluge of the much desired rain, and, hey presto! all is changed. The flowers lift their heads, the dogs get up and shake themselves the flies vanish as by magic, and in spite of leaking roof, we cast all our gloomy thoughts to the winds, and say, "After all, Ceylon is not such a bad place to live in."

This miraculous change of front occurs, just at present two or three times a week; but we have yet a spell of great heat before us ere the S.W. monsoon bursts in full force, bringing cool weather in its train. Rob is preparing for its beneficent reign, by having thousands of holes cut for the young cocoa plants he has raised in his nurseries, in order to supply vacancies on the Estate caused by disease and neglect. The nurseries are first fenced in with stakes placed close together, then long raised

beds are dug, in which the cocoa beans are placed, about a thousand in each bed. Great care is taken to throw away the end beans of each pod, as these produce inferior plants. It is wonderful to see the rate of speed at which the plants grow. They remain in the nurseries three or four months, and are then transplanted to the holes which meanwhile are being prepared for them. The transplanter which I have previously described being used for the work of moving.

Strange to say the holes are not filled in with the soil originally taken out; for what reason I cannot learn. This work of supply is one of the most important on the Estate, especially in these days of cocoa disease, when in some districts, hundreds of trees in one field have had to be cut out, and destroyed; and if they were not at once replaced, the proprietor would soon find his profits disappear. When I use the term "field" you must not imagine a division of land fenced in by walls or hedges, it is here used simply to designate different divisions of the Estate with almost imaginary boundaries. These divisions are used for the convenience of classifying work.

Holing, though one of the most important, is also one of the most unpopular of the works. The surface of the ground becomes almost as hard as a brickbat owing to the great heat.

A cooly has only a primitive kind of shovel, to lift out the soil, being unable to use our English spade, on account of the sharp edge cutting his bare feet; and thus deprived of the use of his own weight in digging, it really is very hard work, and every possible excuse is made in order to shirk the task. Only this week, four coolies who had been put on holing work ran away, pretending they were going to the neighbouring villages to buy curry stuffs. Enquiries are being made as to their whereabouts. When found they will be arrested, and having no arrears of wages due to them, will be punished for leaving their employment without a month's notice.

Holes are made very large $2 \times 2\frac{1}{2}$ feet, for it is said to make the difference of two years in the growth of the plant if they are placed in small holes. When the seedlings are safe in the ground, they are carefully shaded with leafy branches to protect them from the direct rays of the fierce tropical sun, which we must expect when the monsoon is over. As the shade dies away and decays, the young plant gets strong enough to stand the heat, and shoots up, leaving its nursing shelter to fall to pieces, or to become a prey to the numerous kinds of ants, which soon clear away decayed vegetation.

Our "second boy," whose attempts at English were such an amusement, has left us.

He found Raneetotem too dull, and hankered after the gaieties of Kandy, these with the added attraction of five rupees a month extra pay, proved too much for him. In his place we have a young Sinhalese "podian," fresh from a neighbouring Rest House. He does not speak English, so most of my orders have to be given in dumb show. I am getting so expert at conveying my meaning by signs that I think I must be unconsciously training for the post of matron at a deaf and dumb asylum. The few English words our "podian" does know are obviously picked up from rather unceremonious young planters, who have frequented the Rest House. I have been endeavouring to-day to teach him that an off-hand "all right" is not exactly the most suitable way of signifying he has arrived at an understanding of my orders. However, he is very willing, and active, and will doubtless in time become a good servant. Sinhalese servants wear no head covering, the younger ones and those of low caste have their hair cut moderately short like a little boy in England. The older men of higher caste have circular tortoise shell combs, and their back hair arranged in a knot high up at the back of the head. Tamil servants wear their long hair all tucked up under a large white turban, while Malays wear a neat little round cap something like a smoking cap, which they

make themselves by cleverly twisting a figured handkerchief over a paper foundation.

I don't think I have mentioned the beautiful fire-flies which make the moonless nights a lovely, almost magical sight. They dart high up in the air, and in and out of the dark branches of the trees, giving the effect sometimes of a shower of falling stars, and at other times of a distant torch-light procession. I was considerably startled last night on waking to find apparently a little lamp burning on my pillow, and another on the sheet at my side, whilst in different parts of the room were twinkling stars. Of course, as soon as I was fully awake, I knew at once that they were fire-flies, which had taken refuge from the fierce gale blowing outside. One night we found an extraordinary many legged insect climbing up the wall of my son's room. It was covered with hard scales, and was about three and a half inches in length. It carried in its tail two brilliant green lights resembling those of a fire-fly but much larger and more luminous. Before we could catch it, it had crawled away, which was perhaps as well for us, as the coolies, afterwards told us the bite is very painful.

During this month the estate appears to be much frequented by wild animals. Lately one of the watchmen shot a spotted deer, it was quite young, and about the size of a kid with a

lovely small head. We had it roasted whole, the flesh was white, and much resembled a tender turkey both in taste and appearance and had not the slightest gamey flavour. Last night he brought the quills and leg of a porcupine. Porcupine flesh is considered a delicacy, but I can't say I much liked it; it tasted like pork with a soupçon of musk. One morning a young drake was waddling about in front of our kitchen picking up any tit bit he could find, when a jackal crept stealthily up and gave one snap, and carried him off before anyone could interfere. Rob intends having a hunt after elk and wild pig, and so perhaps I may soon have more to say on this subject.

Truly our life is such an uneventful one that I am often tempted not to write at all. It is just these trivialities which make up the sum of existence in this remote place, and no true idea of our daily round could be given, were I to omit this very "small beer." Life in the quietest, and dullest English village would be a vortex of gaiety compared to that of Raneetotem. And yet to a lover of Nature in all its forms—human and otherwise—how infinitely more amusing is this, than the perpetual round of tea parties, which usually distinguishes village life. Above all, one is never bored, at all events by others, though I must honestly confess one does sometimes bore oneself, and one gets

occasionally tired of the groove of one's own stupid thoughts when there is nothing to distract the attention.

CHAPTER VII

I HAVE just met a curious procession of coolies going to one of their Saami places, evidently to perform some act of devotion. This sacred place is in a nook between the projecting roots of a huge banian tree, and the spot is always kept carefully swept. I happened to be walking near and seeing the procession behind me, motioned them to pass, no cooly will pass his "Dorei" or "Dorei Sani," without permission to do so. First came a man carrying an oil bottle, then another bearing aloft a basket shaped like a round straw hassock, on this was a coil of twisted wet white cloth like the coils of a serpent, a third had a long tile filled with wood ashes still alight, whilst a fourth carried a plantain leaf. They were followed by a few more coolies, these being empty handed. I was sorely tempted to climb up a little knoll to watch the proceedings, but on second thoughts, I came to the conclusion that to do so would be an act of impertinent intrusion on my part,

which would probably vex them; for, however mistaken they may be, these visits to the Saami places are to them real acts of devotion, to which they attach much importance; a Saami oath being as binding on them, as our most solemn oaths are on us.

The head Kangany who went to India to marry his daughter has returned, having accomplished his mission quite to his satisfaction. To show that some really reliable natives are to be found, though I grieve to say they are the exceptions, I may mention that he arrived on the evening of the very day he had fixed six weeks ago. We were in hopes that he would bring with him some additional coolies, and especially a few of low caste who would condescend to carry our "beef box" and occasionally fill gaps about the bungalow. But there is so much work at present in his part of India (Travancore) in opening up new coffee and tea estates, that he failed to persuade anyone to come to Ceylon. The dearth on Raneetotem of pariah coolies causes us continual perplexity, for none but they will act as kitchen cooly, or as horse-keeper, or fetch our meat supplies. This very day we were in absolute danger of famine, for the man who usually takes the "beef box" has hurt his leg, two other pariahs were engaged on necessary Estate work, and the fourth has run away to

shirk holing ; so there was no one left to undertake this very necessary duty without breaking caste, a thing not to be thought of for a moment. At last the difficulty was solved by taking a man from the work he was already doing, and we hope to have our supplies in time for an eight o'clock dinner. This system of caste, complicates not only work, but also marriages, for the girls are absolutely compelled to marry into exactly the same caste as their own family. It also causes trouble in sickness, for however weak the invalid, he or she, will eat nothing cooked by our servants or in our kitchen. On a friend's Estate a poor woman was absolutely dying of exhaustion having been ordered by the doctor a more nourishing diet, my friend begged to be allowed to send her jelly and chicken broth ; she emphatically refused, but on great pressure being brought to bear she at last consented, on condition that the lady cooked all the food herself, in bran new saucepans, that had never previously been used. This was accordingly done, and the poor woman's life was saved.

One of the drawbacks of the low country is the great number of snakes. Yesterday as I walked along a well defined path, a "tic polonga" glided across not two inches from my feet. Happily I had been looking down at the time, or else I should probably have trodden

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TAMIL COOLIES WASHING COCOA.

KANDY, WITH DISTANT VIEW OF THE MATALE HILLS. Plate VII.

upon it. Last week a valuable dog belonging to a neighbour was bitten in its kennel by a cobra, and died in five minutes. The reptile bit two other dogs in the same kennel immediately afterwards, but evidently the venom had been exhausted in the first instance, for the two others survived. The kennel adjoined a stable where a much prized horse was in his stall so my friend was only too thankful that the victim happened to be the animal of lesser value.

May 8th.—The shoot, so long planned, has at last come off. On the evening of the 6th, our neighbour arrived to dinner. Soon afterwards a number of his coolies with dogs innumerable appeared, some to act as beaters, and others with guns, hoping to get a shot if the Doreis missed. Everyone retired early to rest. Next morning at daybreak amid much barking of dogs, and much jabbering of Tamil, the gentlemen departed, accompanied by their motley crew, anxious to be at work whilst the scent lay on the dew. They did not come back to the bungalow until midday, hungry and tired, but delighted with their bag of red deer, mouse deer, and a huge lizard. Recent tracks of a large cheetah had been seen, but it could not be found anywhere. We are not quite without amusement; a Saturday and Sunday spent with the M's. generally means plenty of tennis and golf for Rob and always a most enjoyable time

for me. I cannot say enough for Ceylon hospitality. An almost utter stranger, you find yourself welcomed into the pretty pleasant homes, as if you were an old friend, and in cases of illness the kindness and attention one receives are almost incredible. It quite raises one's opinion of human nature, and sends one on one's way rejoicing to find there are such kind people in the world.

MAY 23rd.—The Kandy festivities are just over. They always take place twice a year, at new year, and on, or near to the date of the late Queen's birthday, and consist of a tennis tournament, and gymkana under the auspices of the Sports Club; and include sometimes a ball at Government House, if the Viceregal party happen to be in residence. In any case there is a public ball of some sort, and often a concert. People come into the hotels for two or three days from the neighbourhood, and the ladies take this opportunity of wearing their very smartest frocks. The gymkana ground is a lovely flat, wedge-shaped, well turfed and embossomed in wooded hills. A grand-stand with dressing-rooms attached, and also, on this occasion, a temporary stand, exquisitely decorated with a fringe of the delicate young leaves of the plantain and the cocoanut palm. The events consisted of golf-driving, pigeon-shooting, bending races on bicycles, and on horseback,

leaping, also foot races of all kinds, putting the weight, and high jumps. All the beauty and fashion of the neighbourhood including the Government House party, turned out to see the sport, and a very pretty scene it made ; the ladies' bright summer dresses as they crossed and re-crossed the green sward looking like flowers in the afternoon sunshine.

But to me, a much more interesting sight were two Buddhist processions that I met in Kandy streets. The first was on the occasion of the Sinhalese Wesak Festival. Forty-five priests preceded by horns and tom-toms, and clad in every shade of yellow silk, from cream colour to orange, paraded the streets. The great man of all had a large umbrella carried over his head. Most of them had intellectual faces, but a furtive downcast expression spoilt the looks of many. Wesak is kept up with great pomp by the Sinhalese, even the villagers decorate their houses, placing arches and flags, and Chinese lanterns in front of the verandahs. The richer members of the Sinhalese community take the opportunity of feasting their poorer brethren, and for at least a week afterwards, the newspapers were full of Wesak benefactions, such as the following, culled from the "Ceylon Standard :"

"Alms-giving was on a mighty scale. The Day-
"akas of Wiejenanda Temple in a most liberal manner

"fed and distributed rice and curry, sweets and other "delicacies to over 2,500 persons at the fish market to-"day. The neighbouring fruit market likewise enter-"tained a good many with sweets, young cocoanuts, "tea, &c. Refreshments of a like nature were given at "the plumbago stand."

This is only one of many such announcements.

The other procession was that of a Burmese priestess who had come to visit the celebrated Kandy "Temple of the Tooth." She was lodged on the opposite side of Kandy lake, so we had a prolonged view of the procession as it wended its way along the circuitous road at the water's edge, and the beauty of the scene was very much enhanced by the very vivid reflections on the smooth surface of the lake. All the dresses were pure white, the priestess herself walking under a white canopy, whilst another important person had, what appeared to our irreverent gaze, an old patchwork quilt as a canopy over him (or perhaps her). In front walked what I suppose I must call the band—very primitive drums and fifes with banners. The noise of this, and the wild acclamations of the people in the streets, were almost deafening, but the stateliness of gait of the processionists and the pageant as a whole, were much to be admired. To the native mind, noise seems inseparable from rejoicing. Lately a

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cooly wedding took place near us; the tom-toms began to beat at daybreak, and continued until midnight. One could not help thinking that the bride and bridegroom must be both dazed and deafened before the end of the day. Tom-toms are also beaten when a death occurs —but then in a much slower and monotonous manner.

I have just invested in a light bullock hackery—called here a buggy cart. It is something like a governess car with the addition of a canopy formed by a light iron framework covered with American cloth. A little black Sinhalese bull goes in the shafts with a yolk passed between his head and his hump. The harness is a rather intricate arrangement of rope. The little bull runs capitally, and we did nine and a half miles of very bad road in two hours, the first time I took him out. Hitherto I have had to borrow the hackery belonging to this group of estates, or a neighbour's, whenever I emerged from this solitude, and my vicissitudes have been many. I think I could almost write a book called "The troublesome travels of an unprotected female in Ceylon." Once my driver left me in a lonely part of the road, signed to a slip of a boy to take the reins, disappeared down a side road (doubtless to an illicit arrack still) and only reappeared a couple of miles further on;

my young driver, meanwhile, out of pure devilry having goaded the bulls to a furious pace, the hackery swinging along at the very edge of precipices and just missing by an inch or two stumps of trees and projecting rocks, I holding on inside perfectly helpless, from want of a knowledge of the language.

Another time the bulls had a sulky fit, tried first to take the hackery into a toll-keeper's house, failing in this they proceeded to land me in a native shop; and finally after doing their best to upset me into a deep drain, one of the bulls got his neck out of the yoke, and quietly turned round and looked at me. When I tell you that a great part of the road is bordered on each side by deep drains, to carry off the heavy monsoon rainfall, you will understand it was rather nervous work, and sympathise with me in my rejoicing over having my own small conveyance and an innocent little bull to draw it.

I think my greatest dilemma occurred lately. I was anxious one afternoon to reach Kandy early to do some necessary shopping, preparatory to starting at seven a.m. the following morning on a visit up country, so Rob sent a cooly to Kandy in advance, to fetch a carriage to meet me at the ferry, five and a half miles this side of the town. He gave the cooly strict injunctions not to leave the carriage until I got

into it, and to have it at the ferry at three p.m. I arrived there at the given time, found our cooly waiting for me—he pointed out the carriage, one of two, on the opposite side of the river, I and my luggage were duly taken across, and the conveyance I came in and the cooly returned home. To my horror, on asking which was my carriage I found no one could speak English, excepting a native gentleman who said they were both engaged by him to go to his Estate. I have since found this was a lie. Imagine my predicament, landed alone with my luggage five and a half miles from Kandy. I sat for about an hour by the river bank hoping something might turn up. At the end of that time I walked to a neighbouring toll where the tollkeeper knew a little English; he got me a porter, and we started off to walk to the town. I shall never forget that walk on a dusty road with a blazing afternoon sun pouring down on my devoted head, the dreadful feeling of isolation and helplessness, and the astonished looks of the men working in the paddy fields at the sight of a "Dora Sani" walking alone along the road. At length after about two miles, I saw a Sinhalese gentleman in his bungalow garden. He wore European dress, so I went up, and asked him if he spoke English, which he did perfectly. I told him my difficulties and who I was. "Very awkward, very awkward, I will

arrange it all for you," he kindly said, and he was as good as his word. He ordered round a light bullock cart into which my luggage was put, and I proceeded on my way comfortably seated on my box, but did not reach Kandy until after dark, having been five hours doing sixteen miles. It is I believe a common trick of the natives to bribe the drivers of hired carriages, and annex them at the ferry, if it suits their own convenience to do so.

The poor little girl who was taken some weeks ago to India, and married there became so dreadfully homesick when her father and brother left that her mother has had to go to her. Family feeling appears to be very strong amongst the Tamils. How few village mothers in England would undertake a journey as far as to Southern France to see a homesick daughter.

Our Sinhalese servant did not prove a success, he became more and more stupid until Rob could stand him no longer. We have in his place a remarkably sharp " podian " (young lad) who goes by the name of " Nipper." His father is head servant to our friends the M's, and is quite a travelled man, having visited London eleven times, when cook on the Clan Line of Steamers. He has nine sons. Nipper has been well trained by him and by a lady in whose service he was. His father has sent him out into the world with a good outfit and three

cookery books: the inevitable Mrs. Beeton, a book on Savouries, and another on Pastry. He is only thirteen but is a capital little servant, cleans the sitting-room and the bedrooms, valets his master, writes menus, lays the table, arranges flowers, helps the Appu to wait, and all for the equivalent of about £6 a year wages. One of his greatest accomplishments is that he speaks English, which is to me an untold comfort, as it ensures my wishes and orders being carried out correctly. Added to which, he is a most picturesque little object dressed in white cloth, white jacket, small round cap, earrings, finger rings, and bracelets. I have another boy about the same age who is our tapal (post) cooly, and at spare times works in the garden and attends to the dogs and poultry, but unfortunately is of such high caste, that he would not condescend to do anything in the bungalow, or to fetch meat, and would rather die than eat anything cooked in our kitchen. He carries himself with quite an air. Many of the high caste coolies have this grand air, which makes one really feel there is something in caste.

One old Kangany looks so military, with well clipped white moustache and short side whiskers, and has such a commanding voice that we have nicknamed him "The Major-General." I am sorry to say he is a very stupid old man and not at all as chivalrous as he looks, for

when Rob one day scolded him for some omission he promptly went and slapped the smallest little girl in his gang.

Work amongst the rubber and cotton is getting on apace. Two hundred pounds of cotton were picked yesterday. This kind of cotton is not the same sort as that grown in the States, or in the South Sea Islands, which is produced on a low bush with a flower resembling a Hibiscus. Celyon cotton or "Kapok" grows on a tree, having deeply serated leaves, a waxy cream coloured blossom, and a hard pod three or four inches long, which opens when ripe showing its treasured contents of the most beautiful fluffy, silky cotton encircling rows of hard black seeds. These seeds, unlike their cousins in the South Sea Island cotton, are quite useless as food for poultry. When the pods are brown and ripe, coolies are sent round, some to climb up the trees, and knock them down with long sticks, whilst others of the gang pick them up; a third lot, usually women, collect that which has been blown away by the wind, from over-ripe pods bursting prematurely. All that is collected is then detached from the husks, and put into bags, carried to the store and there weighed. Uncleaned cotton fetches about six rupees per cwt. in the market, but a great deal more if cleaned, that is, the seeds extracted. Doubtless

there are machines for doing this, but the natives have a primitive way of effecting the same result. They put the cocoons of cotton in a cask, and shake it about with a home-made instrument, similar to the toy windmills dear to the heart oflittle children who run holding the cross pieces of stick to face the wind. These sticks tear the cotton apart and the seeds fall to the bottom of the cask, care being taken not to raise them when the fluffy mass is removed to another receptacle. It makes delightfullly soft elastic stuffing for mattresses and cushions; the only drawback being that unless they are stuffed lightly, the contents have a tendency to become lumpy. A Ceylon friend of mine who went home lately tells me he bought a cushion in Aberdeen supposed to be stuffed with down, his suspicions were aroused, he opened it and found Ceylon Kapok.

CHAPTER VIII

June 7th.—The "Big Monsoon" has come. This is the one topic of conversation; our correspondents repeat it, and so do the local newspapers. You, too, would think it an important event if you had been longing and wearying for it for weeks; we have been panting and gasping under a cloudless sky with the shade thermometer registering over 90 degrees day after day; with nights little cooler than the days; miasma mists creeping and crawling up the course of the two rivers; sick coolies found fever-struck lying about the Estate, and numbers coming morning and evening up to the bungalow for medical treatment.

Barring one, this is the latest monsoon on record. Clouds have, for some days, been banking up in the south west, and on the night of June 5th, the real burst was upon us. A furious gale from the south west sprung up suddenly, bringing with it a deluge of rain; it has gone on blowing for the last two days. A real good old

gale, that reminds one of the Equinoctials at home. The wind has all the freshness of its landless home in the southern ocean, and blows straight across Ceylon, carrying all the miasma and stagnant air away to the Bay of Bengal. We have all revived under its influence ; the animals are quite frisky, and the cocoa and coffee have lost the drooping appearance which the great heat produced. Superintendents now work with redoubled energy, and very requisite this is, for during monsoon time all the planting of the year has to be done, and the contents of the cocoa nurseries, which have been reared with such care during the hot season, have now to be placed in the holes already prepared for their reception. The importance of supply will be understood, when it is taken into consideration that cocoanuts usually take seven years, and cocoa four to six years to come into bearing ; so if trees die, and are not replaced, a time must come when the owner will find himself without any crop.

June is a particularly busy month, for not only is there the work of supply, but there is the spring crop of cocoa to be picked and cured, as well as rubber to be collected and cotton to be picked. All the work comes with a rush. At Raneetotem, we are now mustering at five a.m. to get more time, as it frequently rains in the late afternoon, and wet weather suits

neither cotton nor rubber. Ceylon is not the place for any lazy young man, who likes to lounge down to nine o'clock breakfast, unless he means to turn over a very new leaf.

I have mentioned before the necessity of a Planter knowing something of medicine, and during this unhealthy season, I have become more and more convinced of the need. During the last month my son has had to treat cases of chicken-pox, measles, acute rheumatism, violent and prolonged bleeding from the nose, dog bite, numerous bad cuts, ophthalmia, as well as fever of a more or less bad type. From four o'clock in the afternoon until half past, and in the early morning, patients may always be seen about our bungalow, waiting to be prescribed for. Yesterday a baby was brought with bad opthalmia in one eye; the poor little thing had its head plastered over with a kind of mash of green leaves, which on the advice of a Tamil woman had been applied, fully expecting a speedy cure. In all urgent cases the doctor is sent for, but as he lives five miles off, and has an enormous district to travel over, it is sometimes two days before he can come. There is an excellent hospital for coolies at Teldeniya to which any cases are sent who are too ill to be nursed in their own "lines." It not only adds greatly to the comfort of the labourers, but it is a great saving to an Estate, when the super-

intendent can treat the less serious cases, without calling for the services of the medical officer, as fees and mileage come often at the end of the year to a good round sum. Here I should like to mention a very simple cure for chicken-pox, which Tamils firmly believe in and which we have found in every case to be quite effectual. It is to drink the milk of unripe cocoanuts called a coorimba. Two or three coorimbas usually cure a mild attack of chicken-pox. They are indeed, at any time, a most refreshing drink, and are much used by Planters during an exhausting day's work in the field, or on shooting expeditions.

At this season, owing to the swarms of small eye flies, sewing becomes a work of difficulty, and one is apt to get behindhand with the household mending; piles of underwear and socks, to say nothing of larger garments, remind one that something must be done to lessen the heap. Not feeling equal myself to the effort of fighting the flies, and at the same time sewing with half-closed eyes, I bethought me of an ayah living on the next Estate. Here she is now, sitting on a mat on the floor of the back verandah, sewing away for dear life, and looking quite a picture. She is clothed in many folds of white Indian muslin, with a three inch border of crimson and yellow, her hair smoothly braided, and twisted into a knot at the back,

through which gold-headed ornamental pins are passed; a necklace of large gold beads, a nose ring formed of a good sized garnet set in gold, gold earrings, silver armlets, bracelets, and rings complete her costume. She is a Roman Catholic, and has been educated by the nuns at the Roman Catholic school for Tamil girls at Kandy, where she is now about to send her own little girl. For the sum of five rupees a month, the children are boarded, taught Sinhalese, Tamil and English, the "three R's," and to sew neatly. If they show any great ability they are educated to be teachers, otherwise when old enongh they are drafted off to respectable situations as lady's or children's ayahs. Anatchi lived in good situations until she married, and speaks English particularly well, with a refined gentle accent, very refreshing for me to hear. She is now a widow and lives with a married sister, until such time as her baby boy is old enough for her to leave him, to take another situation as ayah. This is another instance of the strength of the ties of family affection amongst the Tamils. None of them would ever think of refusing an asylum to an unfortunate near relation, and the sons even take over the debts of a dead father and mother, and make them their own, even when the departed ones have left absolutely no property to which the son might succeed.

Amongst other information, Anatchi gave me a list of Tamil names, which I append for anyone interested in nomenclature.

WOMEN'S NAMES.	MEN'S NAMES.
Anatchi.	Iyacano.
Minatchi.	Viavery.
Velitchi.	Villane.
Amara.	Mutucarpen.
Carmatchi.	Marthan.
Sandana.	Shavaran.
Sagoma.	Armoghan.
Jesseli.	Ramasamy.
Ponamoni.	Verapen.
Vrigama.	Perinal.
Verama.	Sinasamy.
Parlama.	Carpen.
Carpie.	Raman.
Papachie.	Supiah.
Arnamaly.	Velaithan.
Vuleama.	Samhan.
Mootama.	Vitie.
Odaya.	Ringosamy.
Sinama.	Arlandy.
Marthaka.	Torasamy.
Veri.	Arnamally.
Cathari.	Kutalingen.
Poonama.	Arawally.
Soorama.	Mayapen.
Maria Kana (Mary).	Marimutte.
Uisabet.	Muniandi.
Maru	Sinatamby.
Parpoo.	Colundayan.
Selumbi.	Cevittia.
Multama.	Ponayah.
Adaki.	Katheravale.
Rami.	Sinnia.
Soonderen.	Nargan.

Strange to say Elizabeth is quite a common name amongst the women.

To our great disappointment and sorrow, our pet mouse deer has died. It had learnt to be quite tame and even to follow us about in the rooms of the bungalow. When it was first brought here by one of the watchmen it was so young that we had to feed it with a baby's bottle, but it had long passed that stage, and five minutes before it died appeared in perfect health. A convulsion seized the poor little animal and it was gone in a few moments. The loss of a pet is really quite a grief in our isolated existence. Puppies and all young animals as well as poultry seem extremely liable to be attacked with convulsions, and the first fit is generally fatal.

The monkeys thrive; we call them Punch and Judy. Judy has taken a fancy to me and creeps up my dress into my arms to be petted. The other day she was allowed to go at large for a short time, and when it was time to put her back in her cage for the night, she climbed up a pawpaw tree, and performed a series of most amusing gymnastics. When her would-be captors reached her branch she swiftly swung herself on to another, hanging sometimes by her tail and sometimes by her hands and feet to twigs far too slender for anyone heavier than herself. At last, after amusing us for at least a quarter of an hour, she was caught and put into durance vile. Punch is of a more sedate disposition, he

is very greedy and always cries out piteously for food, whenever he sees the servants carrying dishes to or from the kitchen. We feed them on boiled rice and fruit, but they much appreciate bread, sugar and lettuce leaves.

JUNE 15.—We have had a tremendous south-west gale; at times I thought the roof of the bungalow would have been blown away. Large branches of trees were snapped off like so much matchwood, and occasionally we heard a mighty crack, and then a thud, telling that some exhausted rubber tree had fallen a victim to the blast. The gale was accompanied by heavy rain, which dripped through the badly tiled roof in all directions; so you may imagine it was not a comfortable experience, but uncomfortable as it was, we bore it with cheerful equanimity, for we knew that the fresh cool breezes brought renewed health in their train, and the drenching rain meant a good planting season, and revived life to the drooping cocoa, and coffee.

These low country bungalows are built for the hot weather, and are not suited for wind and rain, as you can well imagine when I tell you that our small sitting-room has two double glass doors, two windows opening outwardly, another door, to say nothing of a high unceiled roof, only lined with thin white calico no fire-place, and a large open space at the top of the

partition dividing it from the next room. This airiness of build is essential in the great heat, but last night we longed for a cosy fire, and an English room in spite of the thermometer in the verandah standing at seventy degrees at ten p.m. It is wonderful how cold we feel in what in England would be thought a high temperature. So accustomed have we been during the last three months to a thermometer ranging somewere from eighty-eight to ninty-five degrees. By force of contrast now, anything in the seventy's seems cold and pleasant, nor do we ever feel oppressed until eighty-four is passed. The other day Rob was wearing a warm Norfolk jacket, originally worn for shooting in Wales, and he was only just comfortably warm in it, with a temperature in the verandah of seventy-two degrees. I am beginning to wonder whether the garments are yet invented in which I can face an English "nor'easter."

We had a serious scare last night. At afternoon muster, two little girls aged respectively eleven and thirteen, and a boy of nine were missing. On enquiry it was found that neither of them had been seen since 2.30. that afternoon when the elder girl told her father that they three had been ordered to work in another field. Rob at once organized a search party, for as there is much waste ground and a good deal of jungle on outlying

parts of the Estate he feared the children had strayed and lost their way, and when benighted would probably get frightened and lie down in the jungle and perhaps, it being monsoon time, get seriously ill from exposure. Added to this, Cheetahs have been killed here as well as other wild animals, so it was imperatively necessary that the children should be found before darkness set in. He took the precaution to send messengers to the neighbouring villages and even to the nearest railway station, lest they might have been decoyed away by someone anxious to get extra child labour. When these steps had been taken, Rob and the majority of the men hastened to search the Estate. They returned about seven o'clock to snatch a hurried meal and to fetch every available lantern and then continued the search, looking behind every rock and into every patch of jungle, but with no result, excepting that the baskets the children were using were found on an outlying grass field, far away from where they were said to have been at work.

The search was continued more or less all night—the fathers and mothers meanwhile had worked themselves into a frantic state of hysterical grief—the women throwing themselves on the ground shrieking, and the men exercising scarcely more self-control. When morning broke the father of one of the girls

remembered he had relations at an Estate about four miles distant, and that his daughter had once accompanied him there, so with very faint hope of success he set out to see if she could have gone thither. This was what had happened, and the children were found bright and happy, and much enjoying their new surroundings, they had planned a little tour of the neighbourhood staying three days on each Estate. Needless to say they were brought back at once—and at the next afternoon muster presented before the Dorei to be punished. Rob fined each of the girls. The father of the boy made a special request that he would beat him, but when cross-questioned his answers were so funny that Rob could only laugh, as did all the coolies. He said, Adam-like, that the elder girl was the ringleader, that she promised him one eighth of a bushel of rice, a new cloth, and to work in the same gang as herself; that, when he refused to go, she and the other girl, each seized one of his hands and ran away with him until they had taken him so far he was afraid to come back. He was dismissed with a severe reprimand. All's well that ends well—and child nature seems much the same, whether the faces be white or brown.

The work of "supplying" goes on apace. More than four thousand cocoa plants have

been put out in less than ten days. It is interesting to see how this is managed. The young plants have grown in their nurseries to the height of about eighteen inches. One cooly gets them up with the transplanter (already described), another wraps them up in semi-circular pieces of plantain stem, which a third man is preparing by cutting the pieces of stem the exact length of the ball of earth raised by the transplanter; a fourth ties them round at the top and bottom, whilst a fifth carries them off in baskets to the holes in various parts of the Estate already prepared to receive them. Where time and expense is an object, there is a cheaper way of supplying, namely by planting seed in much smaller holes, but many planters think that the cocoa does not come on so fast as that grown in nurseries.

Verily, Ceylon is a land much troubled with insects. Just now I am waging war with the white ants; only yesterday they spoilt my black serge skirt. I had converted an unused doorway which stood in a recess, and was one of five doors in my room, into a hanging wardrobe, first nailing clean grass matting over the door. I flattered myself when it was completed with a pretty cretonne curtain that it was both ornamental and useful, in fact quite a work of genius. For the last five months it has answered its purpose, admirably but

yesterday I took down my dress, which I had only worn last Sunday, to find it covered from hem to waistband with a raised zig-zag pattern in red clay. This was all the work of white ants who make their home in these little red tunnels of clay. On further inspection I found the grass matting riddled through and through, and behind it quite an architectural structure, which the ants had formed to help them to climb the walls and thus reach the roof. It wasn't the work of many minutes to tear down the matting, scrape away the clay, and pour Kerosine oil in all the crevices of the door, but alas my poor dress required a longer process to restore it to anything like a wearable condition, and it will never quite recover from the onslaught. We have to keep continually watching the verandah posts, lest they may some day suddenly collapse, turned into powder by these depredators I believe there is one wood, red toona, which withstands them.

Not content with doing all the mischief they can in the bungalow, they also attack the roads, and it is not an uncommon sight to see a large hole, or holes, in the very middle of the roadway, where it has been undermined by ants of one kind or another, so it behoves a horseman to keep a bright look out.

This is one side of the question, but as in most things there is another. Ants are

valuable scavengers and are of the greatest use in destroying decayed vegetable and animal matter, dead leaves, and branches of trees, rotten fruit, and even dead insects and birds disappear by their agency as if by magic. The work achieved by ants is a constant sermon, on the power of numbers, when united for a given purpose; and also a reminder of the old Scotch proverb, "Mony a mickle, makes a muckle." We have here numbers of the high ants nests so ably described; by Professor Drummond in his work on "Tropical Africa." In our part of Ceylon the larger nests that have been deserted by their original builders are often inhabited by cobras, which are held sacred by the coolies, and we see the mouth of the holes sprinkled with ashes of fowls which have been sacrificed in their honour. In connection with ants Rob yesterday observed a curious occurrence:—In passing a tree coated with red clay by the white ants, he knocked it all down thereby depriving the little creatures of their home. In a few seconds a colony of large red ants, which he had not previously noticed were on the spot. They carried off the white ants bodily into their own nest, and in a few more seconds not one was to be seen.

June 20th.—To-day I have been giving an object lesson to our new Dhobie or washerman. We have tried all the Dhobies around, but find

one and all quite ignorant of the rudiments of starching and ironing. All are alike destructive to anything in the shape of lace or frills, and all equally unpunctual and dilatory, To-day our specimen of the tribe brought my pocket handkerchiefs unironed, so I had a flat iron heated, ironed them myself, and then sent some out for his inspection. I believe he had the grace to be ashamed and promised better things next time.

I carried on my laundress operations in the verandah and was surrounded by a group of openmouthed spectators, the horse-keeper, poultry-boy, appu, kitchen coolie, and "Nipper" all watching the process with deep interest. Here, I should like to recommend any ladies coming to the planting districts of Ceylon to have the greater part of their garments made plainly, and to eschew the temptation of dainty and fragile trimmings. I would also strongly advise them to bring with them a box-iron (I could not get one in Kandy) with which to smooth their ribbons and laces. Servants cannot be made to keep the other kind of iron clean, and as it has to be heated in the ashes of the cooking place, it is very apt to get greasy and otherwise dirty.

June 21st.—. The longest day. How different from England. Day breaks in Ceylon about five a.m. and it gets dark at seven p.m. One

misses the long northern twilight which would be so delightful in this hot country where active exercise is unpleasant until four p.m. We have some compensation in the exquisitely beautiful starlight and moonlight nights, than which nothing could be more enjoyable. All the tropical flowers seem to give their choicest scent at night, and the weary frame draws in fresh vigour from the absence of glare, and the cool evening breeze.

Yesterday, as I was driving along the Government road I encountered something quite unexpected, a great big elephant with a Sinhalese man perched on his neck. They are much used for moving large pieces of timber or stone and can be hired for that purpose. There is a regulation that they are not to use the Government roads excepting at certain hours of the day, when there is likely to be little traffic; for they are alarming objects to other animals. If they should chance to meet a conveyance it is the custom for them to be taken into the jungle, at either side of the road. This particular elephant was guided into a patch of cocoa, until I had passed, but my little hackery bull did not take the slightest notice of him. At Katugostata, near Kandy, it is quite one of the sights to drive and see these working elephants bathed in the Mahavillagange River.

I was lately taken to see a new clearing

meant for cocoa and coffee, and was much interested in the work. This is the routine—first the tract of land intended to be planted, is cleared of jungle. The large trees being cut to within two or three feet of the ground. The whole is then set on fire, and allowed to burn until nothing remains but a few stumps, these disappear in the course of time by the help of ants and natural decay. When the fire has done its work, roads, and drains are traced and made; then an army of coolies set to work to make holes for the future plants. These holes are dug in regular lines; in this instance coffee was first planted, leaving space enough between for cocoa which, however, is not put in until a year later. Were the two planted simultaneously, the more vigorous growth of the cocoa would soon cause it to overpower and overshadow the coffee, which requires quite a year's start to enable it to hold its own. Should it be intended to add cocoanuts they would be planted at the same time as the coffee.

June 28th. —At last I have seen our kitchen. Both the servants were seized with illness. I thought it would be quite inhuman not to go and see the little boy of thirteen, so I proceeded to visit them; heralded, unasked, by the kitchen and tapal coolies as well as the horse-keeper, all calling out in Tamil: "The Dorei Sani (lady) is coming." "The Dorei Sani is coming."

So when I got to their room which opens out of the kitchen, two figures stood at the door, wrapped head and all in folds of white muslin, looking very much like the old pictures of Lazarus, rising from the grave. Poor things! they seemed pleased and cheered at seeing me. Both have been ill for some days, the one suffering from chickenpox, and the other from influenza and fever, and we have been at the mercy of the kitchen cooly as regards cooking, and the horse-keeper as regards washing up, whilst I have been house parlour maid. These are little contretemps which ladies going to the Colonies must expect, but it isn't often one has the bad luck to have both bungalow servants laid up at the same time.

The kitchen was not nearly so bad as I expected, and everything seemed clean and tidy and orderly, but the fire-place was a real curiosity. Picture to yourself a broad stone shelf, four feet high, extending the whole width of the room. On this the wood fire is made. Whilst iron bars laid on bricks support the saucepans and in one corner is a clay oven. When I saw it, there was only a small fire in the middle of the shelf, but obviously this could be extended to any width you might require, according to the number of saucepans in use. I have often seen a fire on the hearth in Wales and Scotland, to say nothing of

Queensland, but never before have I seen a raised hearth, it is a capital idea, and prevents the perpetual stooping which is so tiring to the cooks.

At Raneetotem an open window is close to the hearth on both sides of the room, giving the requisite light and air. Other bungalows where I have visited have nice large American stoves constructed to burn wood, but as I have mentioned before, this Estate is rather beyond the range of civilized ways, as far as the appliances provided for us are concerned. It is supposed only to be a berth for a young Sinne Dorei, and ladies are not expected. I am the first, and shall probably be the last who has ever lived here. Civilization and the Government road stop at Ma—ne three miles nearer Kandy.

CHAPTER IX

July 6th.—I have just returned from a visit of a few days to a very fine tea estate in the Matale district. You will have some idea of the magnitude of the operations carried on there, when I tell you that lately fifty thousand pounds of made tea was turned out in three weeks. It has the finest factory I have yet seen; and here I was introduced for the first time to a machine called a packer, which by dint of a judicious shaking motion packs the tea into its box more evenly and firmly than can be done by human agency; with the additional advantage of greater cleanliness, for the old method was for the coolies to pack the tea, pressing it down with their hands, and even sometimes, in the larger boxes, with their feet.

The neighbourhood of Matale is very beautiful. The town lies at the foot of a precipitous mountain which appears to be the end spur of a range of hills trending away to the south west. On its heights are several tea

Estates, and I caught sight of bungalows perched like eagles' nests on what appeared from below to be mere platforms crowning pinnacles of rock. Near the foot of this rugged mountain mass is the famous rock temple of Aliwooharie, much more interesting to my mind than the temple of Buddha's tooth at Kandy. Aliwooharie is only about a hundred yards from the north road to Jaffna, one of the main arteries of traffic in Ceylon. It is said that here the Buddhist doctrines were first reduced to writing about a century before Christ. The temple is approached by a flight of steep stone steps, which are nearly worn away by the feet of the many pilgrims who for over two thousand years, have worshipped in this curious place—a huge mass of rock cleft by fissures of various dimensions.

The principal one, which lies nearly north and south, is many feet in width, and has on its western side various caves which have been artificially enlarged and even in some degree, built up with masonry, into which doors are fitted. Inside each of the caves are colossal statues of Buddha, far larger than life. The Buddhas recline each on a stone platform, and have faces expressive of the utmost gentleness, and a calm, suggestive of the blissful state of "Nirvana," to which all good Buddhists desire to attain. One cave, however, contained a

very alert-looking, sitting up Buddha, with no beauty of expression, only a great deal of cunning and cleverness. Other colossal painted figures, carved in relief, stand round the caves. The walls are decorated, with rather grotesque frescoes depicting the punishments of the wicked, or else with lovely arabesque patterns that would delight the heart of the Kensington School of Art Needlework, so graceful and original are the designs. I was astonished at the freshness of the colours, but the friend who accompanied me, an old resident of the district, tells me that it has all been touched up within a few years. There is a small hut built for the priests amongst the rocks. I should think many offerings must find their way here, as it is on the direct road to India, and, therefore, very accessible to pilgrims. The smaller rock fissures are inhabited by thousands of bats. In the day-time they hang from the projecting portions like torn black banners, at night they come out in ghoulish hosts, the priests, however like to have them there. I put my head into several of these clefts, but quickly withdrew for the horrible odour was unbearable. There is another much larger rock temple at Dambulla, but this I have not seen.

With the customary hospitality of Ceylon I was invited to accompany my friends to breakfast at a planter's bungalow about nine

miles from Matale, still further on the Great North Road. It was a most interesting drive. Every minute one kept passing typical scenes of tropical life, both animate and inanimate. Every variety of palm lined the road. Here hedges of aloe, throwing up their tall blossom spike high in the air, there perennial sunflowers made a blaze of yellow. Now and then one came to avenues of cotton trees, the lower trunks clothed and interlaced with the luxuriant foliage of the pepper plant. Whilst all along the road we met groups of coolies in their costumes of orange, every shade of red, helitrope, and white. This was once the main route by which the coolies went and came from Southern India. The route was closed by Government lest plague might thereby be imported, but it is much to be hoped, in the planting interest that it may soon be re-opened.

At Matale, which is the railway terminus, there was a quarantine station at which the immigrants were detained if they had not been sufficiently long on their journey to fulfil the regulation number of days between leaving India and going to an Estate. To cater for the wants of these travellers, native shops line the road at frequent intervals, where chatties, curry stuffs, rice, dried fish, fruit and cakes are sold. There are also many shady ambulams wherein they could rest from the heat and glare of the

mid-day sun, and cook their simple food. As I pass along I am struck for the thousandth time, with the happy contented faces of the natives, so different from the careworn, weather-beaten countenances of the same class at home, and am more than ever convinced of the influence of climate on happiness. In this favoured country, so little suffices for sustenance. Necessary clothing is reduced to a minimum, and a few logs of wood, which in the low country can be picked up in five minutes for cooking purposes, is all that is needed for fuel. On the Estates, comfortable rooms and medical attendance are provided, free of expense, and villagers make their own huts of wattle and daub, thatched with straw from the neighbouring "paddy" fields. So there is none of the strain and privation, and anxiety to make both ends meet, which takes the heart out of the English peasantry, and makes them old before their time.

Whilst I was away, two deaths occurred at Raneetotem. One, that of my pet monkey who had become quite my friend and companion. Poor little thing, she accidently took some iodoform, and was poisoned. The other death was that of an old man who had spent forty-five years on this and the neighbouring estate. Latterly he had been too old and weak to do much work, so was given the office of beating

the muster tom-tom. From long practice he had become quite expert, and rattled off a tattoo with great effect. He died from that illness so fatal to coolies—pneumonia, because he would not stay in his "lines," but insisted upon being helped into the sunshine and even the wind. I must say I rather sympathise with him in his desire to escape from the dark, windowless room. I have always thought how pleasant it would be to die out in the open, with nothing between you and the blue canopy of heaven.

JULY 16th.—All appearance of the monsoon has passed away, we are again panting for rain, and what is still more important so are the cocoa and coffee bushes, and we tremble for the fate of the eight thousand young supplies that were so lately planted, in full expectation of the customary rains. So far this has been a year of drought, which has materially diminished the amount of crop and consequently the returns which ought to go into the pockets of the owners. There is ever a pleasing uncertainty attending tropical agriculture, and for this reason eight or nine years purchase is considered a sufficient price to pay for planting property, excepting under very exceptional circumstances. For example, the land being situated close to a railway, or in a good residential neighbourhood with an unusually

healthy climate, and then the value is of course higher.

"It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good." The drought that has been the bane of the spring cocoa crop, has been most beneficial to the cotton crop, and has enabled it to be picked in first rate condition. There is something to me most attractive in the sight of great bales of snow white cotton wool (for that is what it looks like), and I have been amusing myself by making cushions of all that I could glean about the Estate, for in spite of the vigilance of the Kanganies a few pods here and there escape notice. Just before leaving home, I popped into my box a number of stray pieces of bazaar odds and ends, such as bits of cretonne, art muslin, silks, art serges, etc. I have found them most useful in decorating this most undecorative bungalow. I should strongly advise anyone coming out here to bring with them everything and anything of that sort that they can lay hands on. Also a few cheap picture frames. Articles that would seem tawdry and makeshift in an English drawing-room have quite a different aspect when it comes to filling an apartment with four bare white-washed walls, and coir matted floors.

The ants have made another assault on my bedroom. This time they began by making

one of their nests in the floor, and gradually worked their way through the coir matting, to a place that was covered with a strip of grass matting. However, a good dose of oil has for the time put them to flight. Yesterday, I saw a wonderful example of the work of white ants. For some time hollows and holes had appeared in one of the roads. On investigation Rob found that a huge colony of white ants had completely undermined the road. When the surface was removed it left a cavity twelve feet by ten feet. This had to be filled with large stones to prevent their returning, as doubtless they will try to do.

I am much struck by the seasons in Ceylon apparently repeating themselves twice in the year. The identical trees which flowered last January are now blossoming again in July, the birds are pairing for the second time, and everything gives one the impression of a second Spring.

I have just seen the most beautiful tree I have ever had the good luck to meet with. It is called by Europeans "The Ceylon Laburnum," and by the natives "Connoopoo." It bears a striking likeness to Laburnum in form of growth, in colour and in leaf, but the flowers instead of being shaped like a pea, resemble a large buttercup with very long stamens, and the sprays of blossom are very much longer.

I measured several, and they were from twenty four to twenty seven inches in length. The Botanical name of this extraordinary tree is "Cassia fistula." The seed pods it produces are as curious as the flowers are beautiful. When ripe they look as if the trees were hung with ebony rulers, as they are black and round and from two to three feet long, and about an inch in diameter.

In the Pavilion grounds at Kandy, I saw another vegetable monstrosity. What flowers the tree bears I do not know, but when I saw it, it was in full leaf, and from many branches depended what from a distance I should have declared were bunches of tallow candles, the veritable old tallow dips of long ago, which may still sometimes be seen hanging from the ceilings of very remote village shops. On nearer approach I found that even the wick at the end was mimicked by these curious appendages. The number of flowering forest trees is a most noticeable feature in Ceylon scenery, and they give a richness of colour to wooded landscapes that I have never noticed elsewhere. Our young bungalow servant takes a delight in dressing the dinner table with flowers and leaves, and makes lovely geometrical designs that would astonish and fill with envy an English parlourmaid. The correctness of his eye, and the lightness of his touch are quite remarkable.

Yesterday, as I sat in the verandah, I was forcibly reminded of my childhood, when as a good little girl with my hands behind me I was wont to stand up and repeat the well known lines "On a chameleon." There, straight in front of me, crawling up the stem of a loquat tree, was a real live chameleon. Instead of moving away, when it saw it had attracted my notice, it remained perfectly still for about ten minutes, changing colour, from red to green, then brown, then blue, then yellow, and finally once more red, in all cases (excepting when its feet became blue) the hideous head of the creature appeared the first part of it to change.

In the early morning I had a disagreeable experience. As I was plucking, a small kind of edible passion-fruit from a tangle of creepers lying on the ground, a tic polonga snake wriggled its green body from almost under my hands; giving me a shiver of fright, and a great feeling of thankfulness that I had escaped from the deadly poison of its bite. Twice before, I have just avoided treading on snakes. The knowledge that they are lurking about in the grass, and amongst the creepers, and that every leafy thicket may possibly hide one or more, rather detracts from the pleasure of my walks and makes it imperative to avoid as much as possible, short cuts, and excursions into the jungle.

Down here in the low country, we are debarred, owing to the danger of snakes, from having our bungalows covered with the wealth of beautiful creepers, which make an up country home a perfect bower of loveliness. But we have, and especially on Raneetotem, one great compensation for many other disadvantages, that is, a superabundance of fruit. I use the word superabundance advisedly, for at present we have a number of pawpaws, about sixteen pineapples, also mangoes, custard apples, pomegranates, and limes all wanting eating. I only wish I had a fairy wand, and could transport divers young nieces and nephews into their midst. My favourite fruit is the pawpaw; it has very much the appearance and taste of a superlatively good rock melon, but with the addition of a peculiar flavour of its own. It is said to contain a large amount of vegetable pepsine. Some scientific men are trying experiments in order to find out if the pepsine can be profitably extracted, and pawpaws grown for commercial purposes.

This is a land of surprises. This morning I passed a cooly woman washing clothes at the dam, to my astonishment she suddenly said, "Bon jour, madame." The mystery was soon explained, she is one of a new gang of coolies just come to Raneetotem, and is a native of the Isle of Bourbon. Unfortunately the French

of the Mauritius and Bourbon coolies is a curious mixture of Tamil and French, so I fear I shall not be able to understand much that she says to me.

Last night we were sitting down to dinner, when most unmistakable sounds of a row came up from the Lines, not by any means an ordinary row, but such sounds as you might expect to attend an Irish faction fight. Shrill penetrating women's voices seemed to lead the way, then the deeper shouts of many men, and the barking of dogs—which together made a very pandemonium of noise. Rob and I expected them every moment to appear at the bungalow, and sometimes the shouts seemed ominously near. However, he sent a messenger to tell them if they did not stop that noise at once, he would fine every Kangany in those Lines. Immediately there was comparative peace, although one could occasionally still hear low mutterings. Eventually the rival factions did come up. The dispute turned out to have been begun by a quarrel between two women. One had borrowed from the other three rupees which she would not repay. So the lender took the law into her own hands, seized the gold earrings from off the debtor's ear nearly slitting an ear and losing one earring which, as they were a valuable pair, costing Rs. 19 was much resented. Whereupon the

woman and her husband went and beat the husband of the money-lender, who happened to be store watchman. All the other coolies took sides and joined in the fray, and hence the hubbub. Doubtless in a day or two they will all be the greatest of friends; this is cooly nature.

JULY 20th.—"Peter Piper picked a peck of pepper" persistently repeats itself in my brain to-day. Our Peter Pipers are picking not only pecks but bushels of pepper, and a very pretty crop it is. It grows in clusters about two inches long, depending from a vine with oval, deeply veined leaves, which twine in luxuriant masses up the stems of forest trees. The pepper berries when first picked and piled up in the store are a study in greens and reds, for as they ripen they turn a lovely coral colour, becoming when dried the ordinary black peppercorns we are accustomed to use in England. The cultivation of the pepper vine is said to be increasing in Ceylon. Chilis are another product which do well in the low country, and would surely pay to grow when it is taken into consideration that more than one million are imported annually into this island from India. We have numbers of the smaller chilis growing in various parts of the Estate. They are much appreciated by the coolies, who use them in their curry, and also by our Appu who makes from them chili

vinegar. In Ceylon the cooks do not use readymade curry powder, but send to the market for a pound of "curry stuff," which consists of a most miscellaneous collection of articles divided into separate parcels, the names of some I did not know, and when I enquired from the appu, he only replied vaguely. "They are just curry stuff, lady." So I was none the wiser, but I recognised, garlic, chilis, maldive fish, ginger, aniseed, and grated cocoa-nut. From these the cooks compound a mixture of their own, and it is generally excellent, especially when we eat with it, as a condiment, home made mango, or tamarind chutney.

CHAPTER X

August 1st.—Last night we had another tremendous gale, the wind rustled through the cocoa-nut palms, and whistled through the Casuarinas just as it does through the rigging of a ship, and once or twice I was quite alarmed; the wind and noise of cracking branches even quieted the rats behind the ceiling cloth. Alas! it did not bring the much hoped for rain. All the reputed signs of coming rain have been with us for some days—the cocoa has flushed—the rain-bird has given forth its curious cry,—the frogs have croaked—and the sky has been black and threatening. We have seen rain showers travelling to right and left of us, but excepting for a few tantalising drops, we have been left dry and parched and are beginning to fear that, for us, this monsoon will be a failure and most of the young plants will die, and must be replaced when the N.E. monsoon visits us in December. This would mean a good deal of extra expense, which in these days

of keen competition is a thing upon which the Visiting Agent would not smile.

No one who has not lived on an Estate out here, could imagine what a Potentate the V.A. is. On him, and on his approval hangs your fate; from his veto there is no appeal, and on his favour depends much of the comfort of your life. He is to the estates under his charge, what the general is to his army, what the head-master is in a public school, or what a certain European sovereign is, or wishes to be to the nation over which he rules. This awestruck attitude of mind, at first amused me much; and I am afraid were I a superintendent, I should never attain to the necessary amount of submission.

I can imagine life on your own Estate where you are accountable to no one, being perfectly ideal, supposing always, it were in a good climate, and happened to pay, but for a man of middle age and upwards to have to submit his mature judgment to another man of his own age, requires an amount of patience and good temper not possessed by every one, and detracts much from the pleasure of a planter's life. Still all this is, I suppose, unavoidable, for the V.A. is a most necessary check on extravagant expend-iture, and a great safeguard to the interests of the shareholders, and absent owners. A tactful man, with a knowledge of the world, as

well as a knowledge of business, can make his visits a valuable help as well as a pleasant social event. Happily, our V.A. is very popular amongst the company's employees, whose work he inspects, and they look forward with pleasure to his coming, and try their best to carry out his suggestions. V.A.'s themselves must sometimes have a disagreeable time of it, for, their mission cannot be always one of praise and approval, and they are sometimes forced to dismiss a faulty superintendent at a moment's notice.

Two incidents very typical of native character happened this week. We were spending Sunday with some friends ten miles away, when suddenly a Raneetotem kangany, attended by one of his coolies, appeared. He came to lay a complaint against our appu, who he said had gone down to the Lines the previous night, had got drunk, thrashed a cooly so badly that he must go to the hospital, and had stabbed him (the kangany) with a knife. Rob asked to see the stab, but none could be found, and the coat which was supposed to be cut was simply a little frayed, so he suspected it was all an invention, and sent the man home, promising to enquire into the whole matter when he returned there next morning. He did so, took the evidence of the head kangany—the appu—and some others

separately, and they all agreed that no cooly had been beaten—no knife had been seen or used, and that our appu had only come down from the bungalow to help some of the kanganies to restore order in a great row which was taking place between the informer and another man. He was taxed with his untruthfulness and malice, severely reprimanded, and fined twenty rupees, which to a man of his position is a large sum.

When I returned in the evening all was quiet again, and I must confess though we had not believed in the accusation it was a great relief to Rob and myself to find our servant was not to blame, for he is a most excellent "boy," and has been many years with his master, having nursed him faithfully through several severe illnesses. This little incident shows how extremely difficult it is to sift evidence, to decide on the credibility of witnesses, and to mete out blame and punishment in the right quarter, owing to the total disregard of truth, and the deceitfulness and duplicity of the native character; joined to these traits there is a curious strain of simplicity, for happily they do not take the trouble, or have not the ability to make their falsehoods hang well together, nor have they the forethought to see that if you enquire further into the matter they will be found out.

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ELEPHANT AT WORK.

FERRY IN DUMBERA

Plate IX.

Superstition is another national characteristic. I have previously mentioned the deserted coolie lines at Raneetotem—deserted, because they are supposed to be infested by "presassies" or devils. A short time ago, a gang of new coolies arrived on the estate; before being taken on, it was explained to their kangany that if they came here, they would have to occupy these lines which would be done up, and made comfortable for their reception, the new coolies meanwhile sharing the already much over-crowded quarters of our people. To all this the kangany agreed. He said, "he wasn't afraid of any devils nor were his coolies, and directly the place was ready they would occupy it." Accordingly the necessary repairs were carried out, the surrounding ground on which were lots of fruit trees, was cleared and made to look neat, and soon all was ready, including an excellent well of water. For several weeks the kangany made excuses for not moving in, and at last he and his coolies flatly refused to go there, and face the devils, making the excuse that the women of the party were timid, and would not hear of staying there alone whilst the men were at work. It would be unwise to compel them to go, for they would either run away in a body (which would be inconvenient) or else some of the more nervous might die of fright.

A friend tells me he has known two perfectly healthy young girls die in a couple of days after, as they said, the devil had come to them ; and Rob knew a man who said he saw the devil in the jungle, and in a few hours was dead. It is supposed to be a curious form of hysteria which attacks the victims ; these visitations usually take place about sunset.

So our deserted, Lines still remain deserted ; but it is settled that the kangany is himself to pay the expense of their having been made habitable.

I am told that this is not at all an uncommon incident and that in most districts there are these deserted houses. Our friend told me that the way he succeeded in getting his set re-occupied was by giving his kangany twenty rupees in order to have a great feast on the spot, a reputed exorcist in the shape of an old man, first turning out the devils by the aid of incantations, sacrifices, and much beating of tom-toms. When a whole night had been made hideous in this manner the devils were said to have departed, and the coolies took up their abode there, and the lines have remained occupied ever since. Probably in most cases the original prejudice arose from an unhealthy feverish season causing an unusual number of deaths amongst the inhabitants.

August 8th.—I have just returned from a

visit to Kandy where I went in order to witness the Perahera, the great Sinhalese Buddhist Festival which takes place annually at the time of the full moon, which falls nearest to the end of July. This year it was rather unusually late, the last day of the festival being on the 7th August. It lasts ten days, and during that time the procession nightly parades the streets; but the last night of all is the grandest. Sinhalese from all the neighbouring countryside flock into Kandy, and when I drove in one Friday afternoon the usually empty streets looked like some brilliant flower bed, from the masses of red, orange, violet, and white, composing the native dresses. Everyone tried to have a new cloth for the occasion, and the Sinhalese ladies drove about the town, loaded with handsome jewellery, dressed in delicate silks, with their little low-necked, short, white jackets a mass of lace and embroidery.

The grass square bordering on Kandy lake, was fringed with booths. These were the very strangest mixture of East and West—stalls crowded with native cakes, sweetmeats and fruits, next perhaps to a phonograph. Again, a stall with bottles of sherbet coloured by the flowers of the hibiscus, and other Ceylon vegetable dyes, side by side with a cinematograph. Besides these there were numerous lotteries, and most popular of all—a

merry-go-round. It looked wonderfully queer to see the wooden steeds ridden by natives in their very unEnglish dress. A man clothed in a garment like a long narrow petticoat does not look elegant astride of a horse.

Of course the great event of the day, or rather night, is the procession. About 6 p.m, which means dusk in this latitude, we went to the Temple compound to see the preliminary ceremony—the dressing of the elephants in all their finery. No sooner had I entered the enclosure than, much to my embarrassment, an elephant was brought up to make a "salaam" to the "Nona" (Sinhalese for lady.) This it did by going down on its fore knees. This was, of course, the signal for me to give a small donation, and I have no doubt a good deal of money is collected in this way. Having walked round and inspected the other elephants, the various shrines, and the sacred Bo tree, we went home to have an early dinner before the great event of the evening.

About eight o'clock a gun was fired from the temple as a signal for the procession to start. First came men bearing flags, then the great temple elephant carrying a silver gilt shrine supposed to contain Buddha's tooth, (but it doesn't,) the tooth is kept safely under lock and key inside the temple. This huge beast has a gorgeous face-cloth embroidered with

gold and silver thread, and encrusted with jewels; his tusks are first twisted round with white muslin, and are then placed in gold sheaths, each sheath having a magnificent ruby, set at its base. At each side of this elephant walks another of nearly, but not quite equal size, these have scarlet face-cloths, having a gold image of Buddha, and other gold devices fastened to the cloth: they are each bestridden by a Kandyan chief in white, with his lap full of flowers, which quite scent the air, and by three or four other men bearing silver gilt umbrellas, and stiff banners, something like an old-fashioned banner screen. After these comes a native band, tom-toms, conch shells, and pipes, (not unlike bag-pipes in sound); then a group of dancers, who dance before each of the Kandyan chiefs, reminding one of the men who danced before David. These chiefs wear most extraordinary costumes, first a pair of white full calico or muslin trousers coming down tight to the ankles, and finished off with a little frill. Over this a kind of white shirt, and above all, yards and yards of white muslin twisted round and round that part of the body which Englishmen try to reduce to slim proportions; fashions vary, and here evidently a vast girth is admired. Over the white full shirt a holero jacket of silk or satin, embroidered in gold or silver, is worn.

The magnificent jewelled belts which these chiefs inherit from their ancestors are of such a huge size, that really this great quantity of muslin sometimes 60 yards, is required to keep them on. These peg top figures are surmounted by a curiously shaped, almost flat white hat, impossible to describe.

The Chiefs are preceded by their distinctive banners, and followed by their retainers to the number of some hundreds, a motley crew, but nevertheless picturesque, seen by the light of torches and braziers held high aloft—indeed the whole procession, which extends for about half a mile, is well lighted, and the gold and silver and jewels flash in the weird flaring glow.

Elephants, bands, dancers or jugglers, chiefs, retainers follow each other over and over again in the same order as I have described. There are four subsidiary temples, and they each send their contingent. The whole thing winds up with four richly curtained Palanquin in which are borne vessels of gold and silver gilt, containing holy water extracted the preceding year, for temple use, from the sacred river the Mahavillagange (the Ganges of Ptolemy).

The procession was not without its comic elements. One was the police marshal, a ruddy portly Englishman, who looked red,

supremely uncomfortable, and out of place, amidst his eastern surroundings, but whose business it is to keep order, and to accompany the procession in its tortuous course through the streets. The other comic incident was two natives dressed up in European costume, solar topee, false whiskers, and beard, they were mounted on very high stilts, and occasionally took off their hats with exaggerated politeness, evidently intended as a skit on our manners and customs.

Some of the dancers were extremely graceful, each group being differently dressed; one set had on a curious kind of armour of many coloured beads; another set were dressed as women, and threw their bright brass chatties into the air as they went through the different evolutions, never failing to catch them again. Thousands of people thronged the streets, the scene was one of barbaric splendour that I can never forget. I was fortunate enough to see it three times from a different coign of vantage, so it is indelibly impressed on my mind. Later in the night, a friend took me round the green, where behind the fringe of booths I saw a most extraordinary sight, whole families of tired villagers had laid themselves down to sleep in family groups, even including the inevitable baby, with large umbrellas fixed over their heads to keep off the dew.

Next morning the festival culminated in the expedition to the Mahavillagange, near Peradeniya, about three miles from Kandy, in order to cut the waters of the river with swords. The residue of last years holy water is poured back into the bosom of the river, and a fresh supply taken in from the portion of water disturbed by the sword; then the multitude return to Kandy. Once more the procession wends its way through the streets, a gun is fired from the temple as a signal that all is over, and in less than an hour the crowd has melted away, the booths are being taken down and the town is in the hands of a perfect army of scavengers. Before evening, all was as quiet as if the ten days festival had never taken place.

I was astonished at the orderliness of the crowd; during the two days that I was present. I only saw one drunken man and he was being taken away out of sight by some of his companions. Though I went freely about the streets, I never met with the slightest incivilty or the least rudeness or pushing. I am afraid I should not be able to say the same for an English crowd of like proportions.

During the year many other pereheras are held in Kandy, and the other different towns, but on a much smaller scale than this.

It must be remembered that Ceylon is the

head-quarters of Buddhism. A late census gives 760,000 as the number of members of this religion residing on the island. From the same source I quote an interesting classification of those attached to the various Buddhist temples; 6,300 priests; 300 temple servants; 140 tom-tom beaters; 1,532 devil-dancers; 200 astrologers; 200 actors, and nautch dancers; 120 snake charmers; 168 musicians. The very enumeration thereof gives me a whirling sense of noise and motion very foreign to our western ideas of religion.

CHAPTER XI

August 25.—Since I last wrote in my Journal, much that was unexpected has happened. In the first place we have been moved from Raneetotem to an Estate some miles nearer Kandy. Rob's lingering malarial attack pointed out only too surely that he had remained already too long in that exhausting climate, so his employers ordered an exchange of billets. In consequence we find ourselves in a charming bungalow in a much better climate, with refreshingly cool mornings and evenings, with near neighbours, bicycling roads, and even a good tennis court. It is rather humiliating to find the effect a good house has on one's sensations. When I sit writing here in my pretty little drawing-room, surrounded by photographs of my dear ones at home, and look across a broad white pillared verandah on to a rose garden in which my old friends, Gloire de Dijon, Triomphe de Rennes, Marshal Niel, Baroness Rothschild, Captain Christy, Fellen-

berg, and many others flourish, I feel as if I had returned once more to this century, instead of living as at Raneetotem in an environment which constantly reminded one of the times of the patriarchs. However I am glad to have had the experience and to have seen what the daily life of a remote low country Estate is like.

Our move was performed by the help of bullock carts and a curious sight it was to see the process of loading. Three carts stood in a row, each the nucleus of a busy group of coolies; a few yards away lay the six bullocks patiently chewing the cud until they were wanted, and not in the least disturbed by the barking of dogs, the screams of the monkey, the cackle of geese, and the crowing of cocks, as they were each and all caught and deposited in their respective carts. A great difficulty was how to convey three broods of chickens which were really too young to face the shaking and the hot sun; ten of these eventually died, but all the rest of the beasts and birds reached their new home safe and sound.

Another problem was the conveyance of the numerous pot plants, which are the ornaments of the verandah, and the pride and joy of almost every planter's heart.

At last everything was got under weigh, and amidst the salaams of the kanganies, and the

open eyed curiosity of a number of little black children, Rob and I took our leave of Ranee-totem, where I, at least, have spent a most interesting and never to be forgotten eight months.

I am told by the older inhabitants that we are having unusually dry weather for the time of year, little or no rain has been measured for the past month, and in consequence the cocoa looks drooping, shows yellow leaves, and many of the pods are turning black. Everyone is watching for signs of coming rain, for this long drought on the top of cocoa disease makes planting at this moment an anxious occupation.

Rob's arrival at this place, where he had once before acted as superintendent, was welcomed by a troup of native dancers. A party of five of the coolies, dressed in picturesque glittering costumes, suddenly appeared in front of the bungalow. A middle-aged man with the inevitable tom-tom, and a younger man with a kind of flageolet, and a pretty young woman composed the band, while two very graceful children, a mass of jewellery and tinsel, danced delightfully and in perfect time to the instruments. At intervals the music and dancing stopped, and then the men chanted Rob's praises in Tamil. Then the children once more began their pretty movements, and so it would have gone on *ad infinitum* had we not conveyed

to them as politely as we could, the fact that we had now had enough, presenting at the same time a little token of our friendship and good feeling in the shape of some welcome rupees. This was the prettiest dancing I had seen. Usually the female dancers are personated by men, and in consequence the movements are heavier and more laboured than they ought to be; but these children were fairy-like and dainty, and the glitter of their jewellery and especially of the little brass cymbals worn like wings on their shoulders made an extremely bright, pretty picture. There is scarcely a day passes without my longing to have the brush of an artist to paint these scenes, sometimes so exquisitely beautiful, at others so exquisitely comic. It is impossible with pen, ink, and paper, to depict what I see, or to convey to my readers a true impression of the charm of this beautiful country.

The fine bungalow which we now inhabit is a relic of the old coffee days when salaries were higher and prices lower, and the rupee had a two shilling purchasing value. A good deal of the furniture has at one time or another been removed elsewhere, but enough solid, handsome pieces remain to give a clue to the history of the past; and with the addition of sundry odds and ends of our own in the shape of dhurries, curtains, pictures, books, cushions and table-

cloths to make very comfortable and habitable quarters for my son and myself. Here, I should like to again urge those coming to Ceylon for the first time, to bring with them any pretty cretonnes, muslins, bits of bright silk, art serge, curtains, pictures, and ornaments they can lay their hands on, for they are simply invaluable in making the rooms look homelike. In the low country the dining-room is usually separated from the drawing-room by a broad arch, and unless you have long, full curtains, and a screen, the two rooms might as well be one. Don't grudge a few extra boxes, but bring out everything that is in the slightest degree decorative. All such things are very expensive here. The shipping companies are most liberal in the amount of luggage allowed, and even if you have to pay a little extra freight, the satisfaction you will derive from the contents of the boxes will be cheap at the price. The necessaries of life are inexpensive, but luxuries, medicines, and articles of household gear, are ruinous in price. Many and many a time have I longed for an English "sixpenny halfpenny" shop from which to replenish our stock of kitchen utensils and common articles of glass and earthenware.

We have only been here a week but already feel much revived by the change of climate. Sickness is a terribly anxious thing, when you

are miles away from the nearest European, and sixteen miles from an English doctor and a chemist's shop. When one is oneself the victim, especially in malarial diseases, one is too ill and too stupefied to care much what may happen, but when it is someone near and dear who is attacked, the perpetual effort to appear calm and cheerful, the constant anxiety and fear of new developments without a doctor at hand, and the strain of deciding, unaided, what is the right course to take, is most trying to bear. When recovery ensues, one's feelings of gratitude and relief are proportionately great, and one quickly forgets the time of stress and anxiety. But I would venture to say that for no amount of salary or kudos, is it worth while venturing into a bad climate; for many of the planting districts in Ceylon are as healthy as any place in England, indeed more so, for those who have any tendency to delicacy of chest.

Judging from the remnants of expensive works to be seen in all directions, this, in the old coffee days, must have been a very lucrative property. Amongst other things there are the remains of a vast system of irrigation. Water was led from the river Mahavillagange along a watercourse for a mile or so to a huge turbine by means of which it was forced through miles of iron pipes, to the different parts of the Estate; the pipes in some places being carried over

aqueducts, at others buried deep in the ground. For some reason it was not found to answer, and now nothing remains but the turbine, the ruins of the aqueducts, and here and there huge iron pipes cropping out of the ground in most unexpected places, looking like the open mouth and head of some unknown monster.

When the great engine employed at that time was first set going a little child crept in, unnoticed until too late to save it, and was ground into such small pieces that not an atom of it was seen again. The tradition has grown in the lapse of time, and the coolies now believe the place where it occurred to be haunted by "Pressassies," and declare that this neglected and now useless machinery invariably works all night. They say they both see and hear its movements, but when Rob begs that they will call us, that we too may see, they always say it is no use, for the "Pressassies," won't work when a "Dorei" is there. It is inconceivable how they can persuade themselves into this belief, but I am quite convinced that it is with them a genuine delusion, and not a pretence to take us in.

Another relic of the days of unstinted expenditure is the broad terrace high up on the side of a hill. It extends for about half a mile in length, and is in many places supported by walls of masonry from ten to twenty feet in

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KANDYAN CHIEF. Plate X.

height. There is a tradition that just below it was the most productive bit of coffee in the whole of the island; now the coffee has been replaced by cocoa. This terrace is my favourite walk; it stands high, and commands a most magnificent view. Stretched at our feet is a great part of the fertile valley of Dumbera, and away beyond it to the north-east rises like a giant wall the mountains of Hunasgeyria, Madulkelle, Rangalla and Madamanura, whilst far away to the right as far as the eye can see are the distant hills of Badulla. I love to go there just before, or after, sunrise, when the peaks are tipped with rosy or golden light, and the gorges lie in purple gloom, and the courses of the two rivers the Mahavillagange, and the Hulugange are marked by a trail of white mist like a silver veil, lovely to look at, but alas, deadly to those living within the malarious influence of its filmy folds.

To a lover of scenery, this place has endless delights, for from another hill we look across the valley of the Mahavillagange to the flourishing tea estates of Hewhetta and Deltotte, and and from yet another to the vast plain stretching away from the high grounds of the Central Province to the sea on the western Coast. The sea itself is not visible, but the light horizon denoting its presence is there, and one can draw on one's imagination for the rest.

No one who has not been in what the Bible calls "a far country" can realise the fascination which the sea has for emigrants. To us it symbolises the link that binds us to home. On its bosom glide the great ocean steamers that bring us tidings of our dear ones, and it is the friendly medium that will at last help us to reach the haven where we would be—the shores of dear Old England.

SEPTEMBER 2nd.—On returning from our evening walk, Rob and I were surprised to see a number of Sinhalese. They turned out to be a Colombo man with his employees, who has bought the cinnamon growing here, and comes from time to time to collect it. Cinnamon, of a kind, is indigenous throughout the jungles of Ceylon, but has to be cultivated before it is suitable for an article of commerce. Sir S. Baker in his "Eight years in Ceylon" thus describes the mode of treatment.

"The tree (when wild) grows to the dimen-"sions of a forest tree, the trunk being usually "about three feet, in circumference, but in its "cultivated state it is never allowed to exceed "the dimensions of a bush, being pruned down "close to the ground every year. This system "of close cutting induces the growth of a large "number of shoots, in the same manner that "withies are produced in England.

"Every twelve months these shoots attain the

"length of six or seven feet and the thickness of "a finger. In the interim, the only cultivation "required is repeated cleaning. The whole "plantation is cut down at the proper period, and "the sticks are then stripped of their bark by "the peelers. These men are called "Chalias," "and their labour is confined to this particular "branch. Their practice in this employment "naturally renders them particularly expert, and "in far less time than is occupied in the descrip- "tion they run a sharp knife longitudinally along "a stick, and at once divest it of the bark. On "the following day the strips are scraped so as "to entirely remove the outer cuticle. One strip "is then laid within the other, which upon becom- "ing dry, contract and form a series of enclosed "pipes. It is subsequently packed in bales and "carefully sewed up in double sacks for exporta- "tion.

These Sinhalese cinnamon men are allowed to occupy a disused store not far from the bungalow, and seem a cheerful happy set—indeed rather too cheerful for our comfort, for when not at work, they amuse themselves by either playing on a flageolet, or else reading aloud at the top of their voices, with a curious up and down cadence, reminding me more than anything of the sounds proceeding from a Welsh dissenting chapel when the minister is endowed with an extra portion of "Hwyl."

Natives appear incapable of reading to themselves. It is a common sight in the streets of Kandy to see, and more especially to hear, a native reading aloud a news sheet, surrounded by a crowd of open-mouthed gaping listeners.

Besides cinnamon, we grow a good deal of vanilla—the pods are dried and oiled and tied up into little half pound bundles, looking very much like packets of cigars. The pods in their green state on the vanilla vine are curious looking things, they grow in clusters, and to-day I saw a cluster of five, which resembled five limp fingers.

Vanilla is, as most people know, an orchid of a creeping type, throwing out little feelers like ivy, by which it attaches itself to any tree with rough bark which may grow near enough for its support. It is a native of Mexico, and other warm moist regions of Central America, but some years ago was introduced into Mauritius, Reunion, and the Seychelles, in all of which places it has become an article of commerce. Lately Indian and Ceylon planters have turned their attention to its cultivation, which is both pleasant and easy, but curing the pod requires great attention and delicate manipulation.

In Reunion, ladies are said to grow vanilla in their gardens, and to superintend its preparation for the market themselves, as a way of increasing their pocket-money. Vanilla pods

when well cured, and of sufficient size, are extremely valuable, not only are they used in confectionery and to flavour tobacco, but in Germany they are employed as a dye. I have been told of a well cultivated plantation of an acre, in Reunion, which yielded in one year six thousand rupees.

As the method of preparation is somewhat interesting, I will here set down a few notes that I have culled from translations from the Dictionaire du Commerce dé la Navigation, and a paper by M. David de Florit of Reunion. In the first place vanilla flowers have to be artificially fertilized. In its original home in the forests of America, the flowers are fertilized by suitable insects, which do not exist in its adopted homes. This is a curious process—the manner in which it is carried out. I will copy from M. de Florit:—"In the flower of the "vanilla the male organ is separated from the "female organ by a light skin, which prevents "the natural fecundation. It is necessary, "therefore, after the flower is completely opened, "to remove this skin with a little instrument, and "by a light pressure of the thumb and the fore-"finger, to cause communication between the "two organs. Fecundation is made from eight "to nine o'clock in the morning, till three o'clock "in the afternoon, and may even be carried on "till four or five; but the pods fecundated late

"never acquire the length and size of those "fecundated earlier in the day. The instrument "used for this operation is generally three or "four inches long, and made thin and round at one "end. It must be neither sharp nor triangular, "in either of these cases it would wound the "organs of the flower, or cause the pollen to fall. The spathes of the cocoanut palm, or plane tree are the best instruments to use." (When ripe for gathering the pods have a slightly yellowish tinge. Great care has to be taken that they do not become over-ripe, as in that case they are liable to split and their market value is decreased.)* "The pods as received in "Europe, are made up in packets of fifty each, and, "should be fresh and very aromatic. When ripe, "the pods are plucked and plunged for a moment "in a vessel of boiling water to blanch them. "They are then hung up in any airy place; and at "this stage there exudes from them a viscuous "liquid which must be removed. The removal "is facilitated by light pressure, repeated two or "three times a day. This dessication is a "difficult operation and must proceed slowly. "The pods are frequently oiled to keep them "supple, and to preserve them from insects; "they are also tied up with cotton thread to keep "them from opening. These are delicate

Note—* "Dictionaire du Commerce de la Navigation."

"operations and the rareness of complete success "explains the high price of the vanilla, of first "quality. As soon as the pods are ready, no "time is lost in wrapping them in oiled paper, "and packing them in tin boxes; for exposed to "the air they would speedily lose their "aroma." Vanilla is often covered with a brilliant silvery efflorescence (much like hoar frost). This kind is preferred to all others. Vanilla is despatched in tin boxes, each box contains about sixty packets of fifty pods each. And the price greatly depends upon the uniform size and length of the pod, and its arriving in a fresh and moist condition.

One of the difficulties of vanilla culture is to hit upon the exact amount of shade under which it should grow. Too much sun causes it to droop and quickly to become sickly, whilst there would be little or no crop under too much shade. There is much land in the low country of Ceylon which would be quite suitable for vanilla cultivation, and the day will come when planters will see that it is to their interest not to neglect such products as this, also spices—plantain flour—chillies, arrowroot and other minor products, to eke out the uncertain profits of tea, coffee and cocoa.

CHAPTER XII

HAVING come to civilized regions we thought we would act accordingly; and therefore, last week, invited our friends and neighbours to tea and tennis. We have an excellent gravelled court, close to the bungalow, which was originally the barbecue of a now disused store. Two things about it would strike a new comer; the ends are protected by a stockade of bamboo stems; and the courts instead of being marked out with whitening, or white paint have lines of thin rope tightly drawn and securely fastened. At first this struck me as being a very dangerous plan, I expected every moment to see a player catch his foot in the rope, and fall headlong; but I was assured "it was the custom of Ceylon," and that no accident ever happened.

"It is the custom of Ceylon" is the stereotyped reply all over the island to any suggestion of improvement or progress, and strange to say it is expected to be quite conclusive. Anything that was good enough for the grandfathers is good enough for the grandchildren; and

suggestions for saving time or labour are quite resented. It is not only the dark races who are so conservative, but native born Europeans, and old settlers all seem to have caught the non-progressive disease, and their remarks often make me wish that I could turn a few hundred enterprising Americans loose in the island.

But to return to our party, the guests arrived in most various vehicles, a dogcart, an American buggy, and two bullock hackerys, whilst a couple of horsemen brought up the rear. It was a curious sight to see the fine, humped white bulls lying lazily under the shade of a clump of tall bamboos awaiting the pleasure of their masters.

We had tea and cakes in the verandah and then adjourned to the tennis court where four native boys awaited us to pick up the balls. Here some capital sets reminded me of summer afternoons in England, but all too soon the waning light warned our friends, they must hurry away to reach home before dark. The very short twilight is one of the great draw-backs to tropical countries ; no sooner does it become cool enough to play active games, than it gets too dark to go on with them. Walks, and rides, and all out-door amusements have to be curtailed, unless you are prepared to run the risk of taking your pleasure under a tropical sun or else in the dark.

September 5th.—This place is much infested by snakes. Since we came here two cobras have been killed in close proximity to the fowlhouse, and two days ago it was thought prudent to burn the long grass in a dry gully, running just below the cattle shed, with the result that three cobras and one tic polonga fell victims to the flames. But yesterday we nearly had a tragedy. A poor woman was bitten by a snake whilst weeding; happily it turned out to be a very small baby tic. She was at once taken in hand by one of the Kanganies, who is supposed to have a native specific for snake bite, and beyond giving herself and us a great fright, she seems to-day none the worse for the accident. The natives have a superstition that if you kill the snake that bites you, you will die, consequently it is often difficult to ascertain what kind of snake it really was; but in this case it was clearly proved that the delinquent was a very young green tic polonga, a snake which is exactly the colour of the cocoa, and coffee leaves, and therefore very difficult, for those working amongst the bushes, to see and avoid.

There seems little doubt that some of the natives have real specifics for snake bite. This Kangany lately cured a man on a neighbouring Estate who had been bitten by a cobra. He says he got the stuff from India. Of course, the in-

gredients are a secret, like the Burling drink in Kent which cures hydrophobia. I often wish St. Patrick had paid Ceylon a visit on his way to Ireland, for the danger of snakes precludes many a tempting ramble in fern clad ravines, and in grass fields, the summits of which promise magnificent views; in jungles where I imagine I could find flowering creepers lovelier than anything I have ever seen before, the snakes have it their own way, and I am obliged to walk sedately along the uninteresting road, not that we have much to complain of, for every Estate is intersected with miles of roads and paths, so that one has always an infinite variety of walks to choose from.

This is English letter day; a day to which we all look forward with delight. Even a postcard from home is welcomed with glee, and the hours are always counted until the mail arrives. I would have every one in the old country realise how much pleasure they can give their absent friends by a few lines of remembrance, or even a newspaper, still more a birthday card, showing they are not forgotten, or an occasional book. Most of us here lead a dual life, our mind is occupied by our daily occupations and work; but our heart is following in imagination the lives of those we love in England.

In the planting districts of Ceylon, books are

even more valuable than they are in Europe; here, where one has so little human society, one makes friends of the heroes and heroines of romance, their joys and their griefs help to pass many an hour of heat and discomfort, which would otherwise be wearisome in the extreme; while as for solid books, one has leisure and freedom from distraction enough to read and thoroughly digest works which one could only skim through in a busy life passed amongst crowds. I find the Kandy Town Library which contains nearly a thousand volumes of well chosen books, a great resource. The subscription is so moderate that anyone could afford to join, and the committee are most liberal in the number of books (six sets at a time) that they allow country members. The Library contains an excellent supply of travels, biographies and books relative to Ceylon, and a great number of novels. The so called new books are perhaps the least interesting to me, because they are just what everyone has been reading during the last five years in England, and one hasn't yet had time to forget them. I should say that a taste for reading was a most useful one for anyone coming out here, adding considerably to their happiness.

In the course of my attempts to learn Tamil, I lately found in "Inge va," the popular phrase book, a most interesting selection from

Percival's "Tamil Proverbs." I give a few of the most striking:—

"Must the loaf be broken to prove it is bread."

"If given without measuring it is a gift; if measured it is a debt."

"Can a somersault be turned at the bottom of a chatty." ("Chatty"—earthenware pot.)

"Although you take a leech and place it on a cushion, it will seek the rubbish."

"Though you cry, will the flood that has burst its bounds return."

"A sluggish foot is the goddess of poverty, an active foot is the goddess of fortune."

"There is neither salt nor acid in your talk."

"The fruit is numberless on the unclimbable tree."

"An eightieth part of laziness, a crore of loss."

"Say little and give full measure."

"No priest can change one's nature."

"The thief and the gardener are one."

"Time passes, but sayings remain."

"A master without anger, a master without wages."

"A moneyless man is a corpse."

"There are no mistakes in silence."

"The top of the skilful will spin evèn in sand."

"Even grass is a weapon to the powerful."

"The dam must be made before the flood comes."

"Will the barking dog catch game."

"A hero at home, a coward in the jungle."

"Even to a monkey, its young is as precious as gold."

"The young calf knows no fear."

"Is a reward given for eating sugar cane?"

"The flower out of reach, I dedicated to the god."

"Where there is anger there is love."

"Will burnt and moist clay cohere?"
"A thorn must be extracted by a thorn."
"If the somersault fail it is death."

A few of their proverbs are identical with our own, as for instance:—"Where there is smoke there is fire." "Can the blind lead the blind." "Many drops make a great flood," etc., etc. Probably the learned in such matters would tell us that our version is of Eastern origin.

SEPTEMBER 7th.—Yesterday was Rob's birthday. We had a little dinner party to celebrate the occasion. Our servants made a great effort to turn out a creditable dinner, and took infinite pains to decorate the table. It really was lovely. Natives have a perfect genius for decoration. In this case, the cloth was covered with a geometrical pattern formed of petals of bougainvillia (which look red at night) and a bright yellow flower, ferns with pendants of poinsettia petals, whilst here and there at the junction of lines a scarlet hibiscus gave a finish and redness to the design. If no flowers are to be obtained they cut the young fronds of the cocoanut Palm into many shaped geometrical sections and arrange them in patterns on the table. All their decorations are laid flat on the cloth, they seem to have little idea of floral arrangements such as we are accustomed to in England. It was a pleasant

change for us, after the solitude of Raneetotem, to feel we had neighbours near enough to come out to dinner; and a rubber of whist with which we finished the evening was to us quite an interesting novelty.

SEPREMBER 11th.—A very sad event happened yesterday,—the death, after two days illness, of the young wife (the ninth successive wife I am told) of one of the Kanganies. Rob had seen her several times, and finding she was in a very high fever, had sent for the nearest doctor, who was momentarily expected when the poor thing passed away. She was only a fragile looking girl of twenty years of age, and had already three little children, to whom she will be a great loss. She must have been a kind, tender-hearted woman, for only a fortnight ago she nursed one of her husband's coolies through a dangerous illness. No sooner had the poor creature died, than the death tom-tom began to beat as a kind of knell. The coolies and also our servants were all in a state of great excitement (I must confess, I think, somewhat pleasurable excitement). A request was sent to me for flowers, which of course I sent; and messengers went hurrying backwards and forwards collecting materials for the feast which is held after the funeral. Work was knocked off at the half day, and by three o'clock in the afternoon the poor girl was reposing in

her grave beside the Mahavillagange river. All the rest of the day, tom-toms were beaten in a monotonous way, that quite got upon one's nerves.

It is extraordinary in what a variety of ways this gong-like instrument can be played. There is one tune (so to speak) for muster, another for a wedding, and a third for a death; the significance of the different sounds being well understood by the coolies.

There appears to be no special spot set apart for graves—but everyone seems to be buried (provided, on this Estate, that it is not close to a road), just where their own fancy may have led them to direct, or their friends may choose. Many graves are found beside the Government road, some of them being quite imposing mausoleums, either built of brick and coloured white, or of mud afterwards covered with chunam. These are usually the Kanganies of the Estate bordering that portion of the road. Sometimes in passing I have noticed an ornamental lantern suspended close to the grave, to scare away jackals, and other beasts, and almost always there is some little attempt at a garden. In our district there are a good many Roman Catholics, so one often sees little white crosses of wood or iron, marking the last resting-place of one of their creed.

I am told that the Tamil coolie is an

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TAMIL COOLY GIRL.

COUNTRY ROAD—BULLOCK CART AND NATIVES CARRYING PINGOS.

Plate XI.

emotional creature whose grief is at the outset almost uncontrollable, but so evanescent that a few days or weeks sees the deepest sorrow assuaged, and smiles quickly follow tears. In the words of the wise old Book—"Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." A temperament which they share with Celtic nations; and one, I think, much to be coveted, for to such, sorrows and cares press lightly, and do not cut into the very soul, as they do in a deeper nature. I am often struck by the similarity in the Tamil character to that of the Celtic branch to which I belong. Both in faults and virtues they are singularly like the Welsh; but the Sinhalese are of quite a different type.

SEPTEMBER 14th.—We have had another proof of the efficacy of Mutivale's cure for snakebite. Two days ago, a bull and two cows were, whilst grazing, bitten by a brown tic polonga; they each fell down sideways quite suddenly—and were very ill for some hours, but the Kangany took them in hand and by next day they were convalescent, and seem now, the second day, to be as well as ever again.

I may mention that last week another cow was seized with identical symptoms in the same grass field, but no one seeing a snake, the cause of her illness was not suspected, and she died two or three hours after the attack. I can only

say that I have myself such perfect faith in this cure, that were I bitten by a snake on this Estate, I don't think I should even feel frightened. It is a great pity for the sake of humanity that some scientific man does not investigate the subject. It is quite conceivable and reasonable to suppose that living for generations in close proximity to venomous serpents, as natives of India have done, the accumulated wisdom of ages may have discovered an antidote in some substance, vegetable or otherwise, unknown or untested by Europeans. One thing I may mention is that the natives do not believe in the use of a ligature* or anything that impedes free circulation, and if one has already been put, they at once remove it. Also the remedy must be applied at once, otherwise it cannot be expected to have the desired effect.

October 5th.—At this season of the year there is little doing on the Estate, excepting the usual routine of weeding—attending to stock—clearing out drains preparatory to the burst of the N.E. monsoon—holeing for supplies, and this year, cutting off many dead branches, and even dead trees, the result of the long drought from which we have been suffering. Happily

* In the case of a snake-charmer that I saw bitten and cured a ligature was used for a few moments, perhaps this is done when the curative agent is a snakestone.

it has now broken up, a series of heavy thunderstorms have greatly refreshed everything. Trees are sprouting in all directions in a way which could hardly be believed by those living in a temperate zone; roses which I had pruned, in three days after pruning, threw out strong shoots; and a creeper opposite my window grows three inches a day. These thunderstorms warn us that the burst of the N.E. monsoon is at hand. So we are making all due preparation, by having every place made watertight. At this present moment two masons are perched on the roof of the bungalow, trying to stop the many leaks caused by the shrinking and cracking of the tiles; during the very hot weather the sun is often so hot that the only wonder is that they don't all crack.

We are having a kind of autumn, inasmuch as some of the trees put on autumn tints. A few of them are bright yellow, and in the distance look like birches, whilst the almond trees are a brilliant red; but alas! the beauty is evanescent, for in two days the leaves all fall off, and in another two or three, the buds begin to unfold, and the young leaves to put in an appearance.

The beneficial effect of the cool weather is felt by human beings as well as vegetation. Our vitality and energy are restored, and life is again worth living. The nights are delici-

ously cool, a blanket is acceptable, and one wakes in the morning, after a night of refreshing sleep, quite ready for a day of active work.

As in England, this month is utilised for mending the Government roads, but the mode of procedure in the two countries is very different. Here, whereas in this district there is plenty of good metalling of a kind of granite to be obtained from quarries by the side of the road, government coolies break it up small, sitting meanwhile under the shade of cadjans (plaited cocoanut palm branches) to protect them from the direct rays of the sun. Women carry the metalling to the road in baskets on their heads, emptying them on the required spot, under the supervision of a Kangany, then return for more, This procession of women in their bright clothes and baskets empty or full, passing to and fro goes on for hours. When the stones are spread, other coolies appear to pour water on them. Usually the water is brought in an enormous cask on wheels, drawn by two bulls, but in remoter places, another procession, with chatties instead of baskets, does the work. Lastly the road is reduced to a proper surface by a huge roller, to which two pairs of bulls are attached, each pair having its own yoke, and its own driver standing between them—the foremost pair being attached to the roller by chains. The result of all this is a

splendid road. The government roads of Ceylon, in width, in smoothness of surface, and general well-kept appearance, compare favourably with the best English high roads; and where the hills are not too long, they are the very beau ideal of what a cyclist would most desire. Albeit the method by which this result is achieved strikes a newcomer as very quaint and primitive.

The efficient state of the road department is due in great measure to the untiring energy and skill of the late Major Skinner, who began his roadmaking career in 1820, as a boy of fifteen, but already an officer in the Ceylon Rifles. He was given two hundred Kandyan labourers, and told to make a section of the road between Kandy and Colombo. Although he had no experience of such work he carried it out successfully. This was the first trunk road made in the island, but when Major Skinner retired, forty-seven years later, in 1867, Ceylon could boast of nearly three thousand miles of made roads; one fifth of which were first class metalled roads, and another fifth excellent gravelled highways. Most of these were either surveyed by Major Skinner or made in some way under his auspices; and it was he who built the beautiful satin wood bridge over the Mahavillagange at Peradeniya, in which neither a bolt nor a nail is used

throughout its structure. He remained long enough in the island to see the railway commenced between Colombo and Kandy; which takes a passenger from the one town to the other in about four hours. A great change from the state of things early in the century, when it was said to take a traveller from Colombo six weeks to reach Kandy, trudging through paddy fields, and beds of deep and heavy sand, or scrambling over rocks and precipitous ravines, with nothing but a narrow footpath to guide him through almost impenetrable jungle. I believe I am correct in saying that, in proportion to its size, Ceylon is now the best roaded of all the Colonies.

CHAPTER XIII

We are, at present, suffering from a perfect plague of common black house flies. They cover everything eatable, and, in common with a much smaller variety, are perpetually flying into one's eyes. This nuisance is in part caused by the cleaning out of a large cattle-shed just below the bungalow, and the flies will, I am told, disappear when the monsoon really bursts. I sincerely hope so.

The Ceylon cattlesheds are built in such a curious fashion, that I must describe one. In the first place it must be borne in mind that the stock on a cocoa Estate, with the exception of the working bullocks, is kept to provide manure for the enrichment of the crops, therefore everything is arranged to facilitate the handling of that product. The shed here is a long building with an iron roof, built so to speak, in three terraces, each about eight feet higher than the other. In the top terrace there is room for thirty cattle to stand abreast in a

long line, with a similar number ranged at their back, with their heads in an opposite direction. These cattle are stall fed with grass and poonac and are bedded down with a coarse kind of grass almost like straw. When fresh bedding is required, the old is thrown into the next terrace, which is occupied by a number of pigs; these have layers and layers of bedding thrown down for their use, till the surface becomes so much raised, and forms such a rich manure that it is thought time to remove it, and to place it in a stack outside the shed ready for use when required. Then *da capo*. The third terrace is used as a cart shed, though a small portion at one end is enclosed with a bamboo stockade, and divided off into pig styes where the young litters of pigs are reared before they are old enough to be turned loose with the others. Nine coolies under a Kangany are told off to attend to the two cattle sheds, and to cut grass for their inmates; and each grass cutter is obliged to cut eighty bundles a day measuring two and a half feet each way.

Besides these stall fed cattle, there is quite a herd of young stock and animals which belong to outsiders who pay so much a month for agistment. These graze on the grass fields and are herded to prevent straying. It is a very pretty sight in the early morning to see them grazing on the hill side, and reminds

one much of a mountain farm in Wales or Scotland.

October 7th.—Last night I was called out to see two large snakes which had been killed by one of the watchmen. One a cobra measuring five feet six inches; the other, a brown tic polonga, a very beautiful snake with diamond shaped marks of a darker brown.

October 12th.—At present the store is a most interesting sight: full to overflowing with coffee which has come here to be pulped from a neighbouring Estate, their own pulper having suddenly broken down. Coffee in sacks—mounds of coffee on the barbecue, coffee spread in orderly layers in the drying room, parchment coffee, black coffee, and prettiest of all, red and green cherry, just picked and brought in. I have before described a hand pulper, but the one used here is worked by water power, and is on a much larger scale. A series of little buckets arranged like a dredge, pick up the cherry and throw it into the pulper, a stream of water flows over it, driving the coffee into the inner recesses of the machine (which I am too ignorant to describe), from which it issues in two streams, one carrying the bean into a receptacle from which, later on, it is collected and dried, the other taking away the refuse husks which are afterwards conveyed to the manure stack previously described.

Yesterday, there were several hundred pounds worth of coffee in the store, and it is still coming in daily in large quantities. Where such valuable crop is stored, an extra watchman is put on, not only to keep the usual store watchman company, but as an extra precaution to safeguard him from yielding to the temptation of stealing therefrom; a temptation which must be very strong, when you consider the poverty of these people, and the facility with which they can dispose of stolen goods to the keepers of village caddies (shops).

In the afternoon we had a most exciting episode. The English meil had just arrived, and I was sitting in the verandah enjoying my budget, when, lifting up my eyes for a moment I saw an astonishing procession. First came our Appu in a great state of heat and excitement, followed by the two watchmen with their guns, driving in front of them a couple of wretched-looking, half naked Moormen, with their hands tied fast together; a number of coolies bringing up the rear. Rob was quickly on the spot and ascertained that our servant when walking home by a short cut through the village, had come upon these men stealing cocoa. He tried to seize the bags which contained the pods, upon which a scrimmage ensued. He contrived to knock two or three teeth out of the jaw of one of the thieves; they in turn tried to stab

him. In spite of their being two to one, happily the Appu managed to hold his own, and to hold on to the men until one of our coolies appeared on the scene. Between them they secured the Moormen and likewise the stolen cocoa and knife.

Rob sent for the Arachi (village headman) and they were marched off to the nearest police station, but before the arrival of the Arachi one of them offered Rob a bribe of thirty rupees (£2) to let them off. Needless to say, it was indignantly refused. My son is rather glad to have such a clear case of stealing to bring forward, and hopes the thieves will have a sufficiently severe sentence to deter others from the same practice, for cocoa stealing is a source of great loss to the proprietors of this and the neighbouring Estates. Though armed watchmen patrol all night, the extent of ground to be covered is so great that thieves have always a good chance of evading detection. It is, I fear, not a very difficult matter for any-one knowing the place to steal cocoa, and also to dispose of it profitably. A single full-sized cocoa pod fetches ten cents at the village caddies. As they can get enough fermented toddy to make them drunk for five cents, coolies have thus a great temptation to steal.

A reformer is much needed in Ceylon to wage war against native dishonesty and

untruthfulness. Of course, these are the besetting sins of all Eastern nations, but here the lying and pilfering is done with such childlike simplicity, that were it not so grave a matter, it would be quite laughable. A coolie will tell a lie in a most assured manner, though if he exercised any thought, he would know that in the course of two or three minutes the lie would be found out, and when detected he only smiles. If caught in the very act of purloining, he still smiles and makes the most fatuous excuses, either that he thought we "didn't want the article in question," or that "he was only taking it to use for a little time," or this, very often, "the Appu had given it him." A young boy of fourteen that Rob had taken into the bungalow to be trained for a servant helped himself to a rupee which he found on his master's dressing-table. The Appu caught him red-handed, and as he could not deny the theft he said he had put it into his pocket to keep it safe for Master. Shame at being found out seems not to enter into their nature at all.

In connection with this prevalence of dishonesty, I must here give the sequel of the little romance which took place when we were at Raneetotem. It may be remembered that I wrote of the young daughter of the head Kangany who was taken to India to be married

because no one of suitable caste and standing could be found in this district. Poor little girl, her marriage has had a sad beginning. The highly respectable husband who was found for her, is now in an Indian prison for stealing a boat, and she has had to return to her parents at Raneetotem till his sentence expires.

It is only fair to say that there are many and brilliant exceptions to the rule. I am sometimes astonished at the honesty of the beef coolies, and also of untrained servants, who, coming into a bungalow, perhaps for the first time in their lives, must see many articles to arouse both their curiosity and cupidity, and yet refrain from appropriating them. Only last week, before spending the afternoon at a friend's house, I carelessly left three diamond rings on my dressing-table. I remembered what I had done soon after I had started, and did not much enjoy the party in consequence. I said nothing and when I came home I found the rings arranged in a little open box on my table, so they had evidently not escaped observation, but were perfectly safe.

October 26th.—The cocoa stealing case is over, the thieves having each been sentenced to three months' imprisonment. A sentence, we trust, sufficiently severe to act as a deterrent amongst our native neighbours for some time to come.

During the last week I have been visiting in one of those hospitable houses which are scattered everywhere amongst the planting districts of Ceylon. Whatever accusations may be brought against Ceylon planters and their families, lack of hospitality cannot be one. The Biblical injunction to entertain strangers is carried out to the fullest extent. So kindly and sympathetic are the hosts and hostesses that in a few days, acquaintanceship ripens into friendship, and, as far as I am concerned, I can say with truth that some of the pleasantest memories of my life will be of those happy days spent in the homes of people whom I now count as friends, but who, a few short years ago were unknown to me even by name.

My last visit has been paid in the mountains of East Matale, the bungalow where I stayed is at an elevation of 2500 feet, but the highest point of the Estate is more than 1000 feet higher. The cool nights and breezy mornings, and evenings, made a refreshing change from the lower elevation and warmer climate of Dumbera. Let me try and describe the surroundings; a semicircle of mountains open only to the west, where throughgaps in a mountain chain glimpses are caught of the great plain, where the wonderful ruins of the ancient city of Anaradhapura still stand, a monument of departed grandeur. To the north and east the tops of

the hills are clothed with belts of jungle, and the lower slopes are a mass of tea. The southern end of the semicircle reminds one of the grassy hill-sides of Dumfriesshire, covered as they are with close green turf, but I was told that in the good old days when King Coffee reigned, these slopes were covered with the all pervading crop of the island. Rocky mountain streams run down the hill-side in all directions. In the midst of all this natural beauty, on a slightly projecting knoll, stands the bungalow with trim kept lawns, a tennis court, roses everywhere, even to hedges of crimson roses. Within is everything that cultured denizens could wish, piano, violin, paintings, and best of all an excellent collection of books. I mention all this to give some idea of the pleasant cultivated life that can be led by Ceylon planters, even though they may be, as in this case, fourteen miles from a railway and (thirty-five) from anything we in Europe would consider deserving the name of town. This is rather an exceptionally favoured spot, for within a mile of it may be found a small church where occasional services are held, a doctor, and dispensary, as well as a post office.

I had the privilege of witnessing a magnificent thunderstorm. It was grand to see the vivid tropical lightning in zig-zags, in chains, in flashes sometimes blue, and at others rose coloured, or

yellow, flashing across the sky, and to hear peal after peal of thunder, re-echoed from hill to hill. Next day came the burst of the N.E. monsoon when three inches of rain fell in as many hours, one felt sympathy with anyone obliged to face such a pitiless torrent, and very thankful to have a water-tight roof over one's head and a warm English dress to wear.

When once the monsoon has burst, for some weeks the afternoon weather is uncertain, so I took advantage of a fine morning to start on my homeward way, 6.30 a.m. found me in my hostess' rickshaw and before nine o'clock, four very active coolies landed me safely at Matale station ; a run of fourteen miles, without change of coolies, in two and a half hours ; a feat of strength and agility I don't think many Englishmen would care to emulate. It is a most exhilarating feeling being rushed downhill in the brisk morning air, but when I was whisked round corners at the same furious rate, my feelings were not quite so joyous, and I must confess to calling out vociferously two of the very few Tamil words that I have picked up, "Pia po," "Pia po," which means "go more slowly." To my surprise on my arrival at home ; I found the monsoon had not yet burst in Dumbera."

This was only one of many pleasant visits I was privileged to pay to friends residing in

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TAMIL WOMAN, CORYA CAST. Plate XII.

different parts of the island. The first time I went "up country" to the mountain zone was to stay near Hatton. I was enchanted with the magnificent scenery—Switzerland without the snow. The railway zig-zags slowly up and up, now crossing a roaring torrent, anon gliding along the side of a mountain pass. Now and then, doubling upon itself, in order to achieve the necessary ascent from 1600 feet at Kandy to 4160 feet at Hatton, and 5292 at Nanuoya. The palms are left behind, and in their place acres and acres of tea everywhere meet the eye, whilst on the mountain side giant ferns, a large kind of stag's horn moss, and mauve cistus may be seen. Hatton boasts of an hotel from which excursions can be made to Adam's Peak and is the centre of a large and rich planting district, the very pick of Ceylon for residential purposes. The climate, excepting for the hot sun at noonday, is a cool one, and the mode of life up here in Dikoya, Maskeliya, and Dimbula, is more English than it is any other district where I have been. Many men own their own Estates and in consequence have more available leisure for social functions ; on a club day at Darrawella, the pretty dresses of the ladies, and the smart carriages, added to the bracing breezes, make one imagine oneself at some garden party at home. My friend's drawing room is very English, papered walls, carpeted floors, and

above all, a real fire-place, give it a most cosy air and I have known a bright fire in that altitude, 4500 feet, to be decidedly comfortable.

Palm Sunday found me attending the lovely little church—a village church in miniature—standing alone at the head of a mountain gorge, in the midst of a small but very well kept churchyard. Sad, sad was the inscription on many a white cross; young lives cut off in their prime resting here so far away from all who loved them; but, barring the width of the ocean between them and the graves of their forefathers, no sweeter spot could be found to rest in. Still one thinks with pity of the last hours spent amongst strangers, and of mothers at home wearying for one farewell look.

Hatton, and the village of Dikoya, both contain long streets of native shops, and a few European warehouses, in which a little of everything is sold. Both these places are on the direct route for pilgrims to Adam's Peak, and at certain seasons of the year, troops of weary men and women may be met along the road returning from this, to them, sacred spot.

On the other side of Hatton, where I have also spent happy days at a friend's house, is Ambagamuwa, which rejoices in the reputation of being one of the wettest districts in Ceylon, where the average rainfall is 199 inches annually, falling on 233 days, and where 9.92

inches of rain have been known to fall in twenty-four hours.

Another visit I paid to a friend of my girlhood at her pretty house in picturesque Pundaloya. Every inch of ground round the bungalow bore evidence of a lady's taste, and had been laid out to the best advantage, and planted with ferns, flowers, and ornamental shrubs. A rocky mountain stream wended its way in tiny cascades through the garden, which added greatly to the beauty; roses and lilies as well as scarlet geraniums grew along its banks; and from the verandah and also from my room, could be seen a view extending almost to Kandy, forty miles away. It was most cheering in this land of strangers to be once more called by my Christian name, and to have what the Scotch call a "good crack" about old days and old friends.

I must not omit to mention a very pleasant week that I spent on a fine tea Estate in Udu Pusselawa. I passed through Newera Eliya to reach the house of my kind and hospitable friends. The Sanatorium is, I can imagine, a bright, gay place to stay at in the season, if you are in the "swim," but my acquaintance with it was on two grey days, and I was not struck by any natural beauty in the situation. The houses are also scattered and uninteresting. Doubtless, had I seen more of the place, I

should have fallen a victim to its enchantment, like the rest of the Ceylon world.

From Newera Eliya to B., I had to be taken in a rickshaw ten miles. To make sure the coolies knew exactly where I was going, I got the manager of the hotel from which I started, to cross-question them. He was quite satisfied, and to make things doubly sure, told me the turn off was at the tenth mile-stone. This landmark duly appeared, the coolies stopped, I got out, they loaded themselves with all my impedimenta, and I proceeded to follow them up a winding road evidently leading to a bungalow. On and on we went for about a mile, until at last we arrived in front of a very pretty gabled house, surrounded by a lawn and flower garden. I thought it curious that nothing was to be seen or heard of the large family whose guest I was to be; at last a smart looking "boy" appeared with his eyes round with surprise at the sight of a lady evidently come to stay; then his master came on the scene, I am sure equally horrified, at the unexpected apparition. He quickly explained the matter, which was that the stupid coolies had taken the road to the left, which had landed me at a bachelor's bungalow, instead of to the right, which would have taken me to B. He was most kind and hospitable and invited me to tea, but I

thought I had better quickly retrace my steps to the Government Road, and thence make a fresh departure, and afterwards when I met him at dinner at the house of my friends, we had a hearty laugh over the occurrence. A large and merry party of young people made this a most enjoyable visit, music, games and dancing filled up the time, and when I was not otherwise engaged I was never tired of visiting the garden with its wealth of English as well as Ceylon flowers. Thanks to the kindness of friends I have thus been enabled to visit many parts of the island which an ordinary globe trotter would not see, and have also got an insight into phases of planting life, so to speak, from the inside, and not the usual outside view of a mere traveller.

CHAPTER XIV

October 28th.—The great event has at last come. This afternoon we have had a perfect deluge of rain, making me feel glad I got home before the burst, for our roads cut up very fast, which makes it heavy work for my little Hackery bull; also the contents of a box carried on a man's head through pouring rain would not afterwards present the smartest of appearances. It is curious that at two places not more than thirty-five miles apart, there should have been a difference of five days in the date of the burst of the N.E. monsoon. Probably, it may be accounted for by there being a high range of mountains between the two districts.

November 4th.—The weather is now delightfully cool. Owing to the morning mist, we have had to give up having our early tea in the verandah, and instead take it by lamplight in the dining-room. It is only just light at muster time (5.30 a.m.) The days are perceptibly shorter, it being almost dark at six o'clock in the evening. Life would be very pleasant were it

not that the insects seem to be having a perfect saturnalia. From the crickets, who chirp all night as loudly as birds do in the English spring-time, down to the tiniest eyefly, all gradations put in an appearance. There are myriads of flies of sorts, and millions of ants, red, black and white. Whole flights of winged ants, who, poor, foolish creatures, cast their wings, and then quickly die. The roads are covered with these long wings, looking like the petals of strange flowers; here and there one passes a tree, a perfect hecatomb of wings at its foot, as if in their blind rush the battalions had hurled themselves against the trunk and come to terrible slaughter.

We find the best trap for flies is a saucer of soap-suds, such as children delight in preparing for bubbles. The "Poochies" (Tamil word for all noxious insects) are attracted to it, thinking it some delicate sweet, and are then caught and stifled in the network of bubbles. I have bought fly-papers, but found them useless. I suppose the sea air had affected them, and made the poison evaporate. Amongst insect pests, I do not see the green fly which plays such havoc with English roses. Our roses are now in perfection. We have bushes a perfect sheet of delicate yellow, and many pale blush kinds, which look cool and refreshing. La France, Baroness Rothschild, Captain Christie and Marshal Neil do remarkably well, and so does

Gloire de Dijon, but I notice that all the Gloires I have seen in Ceylon have a pinker tinge than I am accustomed to. I miss the richness of the yellower tint. We have a small bright pink Japanese polyanthus rose, which is very effective; the bush is a perfect sheet of pink clusters, each individual flower being about the size of a sixpence. We have in blossom gardenia—double and single—stephanotis, and Cape jessamine, the scent almost too overpowering; also several kinds of Hibiscus, lilies, balsams, white and pink cannas, and dahlias, which, with different coloured crotons and Japanese palms, make up quite a gay garden. I have sown some English flower seeds to come later, Phlox Drummondi, mallow, and sweet-williams. Our neighbours have geraniums and petunias, but they and I have failed to grow Shirley or Iceland poppies; and mignonette does not flourish: it develops into long straggling plants with attenuated flowers. Our little society has had a great addition lately in the persons of a planter and his wife who have just returned from a well-earned holiday in England. They are most hospitable people, and at once hastened to resume their "at home" day. The M.'s also receive one day in the week, so we have two pleasant meeting-places where the neighbours assemble as early in the afternoon as work will allow, for

tea, tennis, croquet and golf. These little breaks in the usual monotony are much appreciated, and although of necessity the same people meet over and over again, we are all good friends, we do not see enough of each other to get wearied, and an occasional visitor from Kandy gives the sauce of novelty.

November 9th.—The store becomes more and more interesting. It is at present full to overflowing with 2000 bushels of coffee from P——, and quantities of cocoa. Last week the coffee cherry came in so fast that the coolies had to work night and day, in relays, to get it pulped sufficiently quickly, to prevent its losing the beautiful light colour from which the best grade take its name of parchment coffee. It is really a wonderful sight to see four large rooms heaped with piles of coffee only waiting to be put into sacks and despatched. Such a crop has not been known on this group of Estates for twenty years. It will go far to make up for any deficiency that may be caused by the late outbreak of disease amongst the cocoa.

November 25th.—Since I last wrote Teevali has come and gone. The Tamils have two great Festivals Thai Pongal in January and Teevali in November, the date of both varies slightly as it depends upon astronomical data. But this year Teevali was kept on November 12th and 13th, which with Sunday 14th gave a

three days' holiday. It would be difficult to say whether coolies or Superintendents enjoy it most. The coolies have a big "Saami" and a great feast, and I am sorry to say consume a considerable amount of arrack. The Superintendents usually take advantage of no work to get leave to go away for a few days. Rob went up to the Rangalla hills, where a most successful tennis tournament had been organised. I meanwhile accompanied a friend on a delightful trip to Colombo.

We stayed at the Galle Face Hotel situated quite away from the noise and bustle of the town, on the very brink of the sea. It is in every way a most luxurious place to sojourn in. I perfectly revelled at night in lying with my windows wide open—the health-giving sea breeze blowing in my face, and the splash of the waves lulling me to sleep. At this time of the year great care is always taken to select rooms facing the sea, for a deadly wind, called locally the "land wind," is very apt to blow off the shore across the low lying swampy ground at the back of Colombo, bringing in its train fever and much sickness. People speak of a person having a "touch of the land wind," as if it were a distinct and fully recognised disease.

Colombo is often called "the Clapham Junction of the World," so many ocean routes here converge, and at the innumerable small

tables in the huge white dining saloon of the Galle Face Hotel, may be seen at one time passengers from England, France, and Germany, India, China, the Straits, Burmah, and Australia and New Zealand. Whilst I was staying there one of the Japanese passenger line steamers came in. The next table to us was occupied by a Japanese lady and two gentlemen, all in European dress, but their Japanese servant waited on them in most gorgeous attire, a mixture of silk and gold embroidery impossible to describe.

Colombo itself is full of interest with its shops of native jewellery and all the products of the East, in the shape of rich stuffs, and embroideries, china, carved woods, tortoiseshell, silver, lace, and in fact every sort of novelty to tempt the Western eye, and to open the Western purse. It has also a museum, fine harbour works, and there are many lovely drives in the suburbs.

I returned home to find that the excellent young servant, whom I have previously mentioned, had been the victim of a bad attack of malarial fever, and was quite incapacitated for work. We had a doctor, and set ourselves to follow his directions to nurse the boy back to health and strength. Thinking that the nourishing food we could give him would accomplish that object more quickly, than if we

sent him back to take his share in his father's hut with eight brothers and sisters; however, his father thought otherwise, and I copy his letter on the subject, as being a very good example of the way in which natives express themselves. It begins :—

"Most respected Lady,

"I most humbly beg leave to inform your lady-"ship that I am very grateful to your ladyship for the "kindness shown towards my humble self and my poor "son, your ladyship's humble and dutiful servant. It is "with deep regret that myself and my poor family feel "very much the absence of my sick child, who I doubt "not will soon come to himself under your ladyship's "tender care; but our tender feelings and affection "towards this sick child who is out of our sight are "really made trying and almost unbearable. I there-"fore beg with due deference and submission that your "ladyship out of goodness be graciously pleased to "suffer my child to come to me, and I will send him "back if it pleases your ladyship after he has recovered, "or I would prefer if it so please your ladyship to pay "him off for the benefit of his health, which is the only "thing we have to look for to get on earning.

"Trusting that your ladyship will be pleased to grant "my humble request and in anticipation therewith "send bearer my mother (N.B. really his wife) to "accompany or rather bring the boy with her, which "act of kindness shall with the sincerest gratitude be "ever remembered by

"Your ladyship's
"most humble and dutiful sevrant,
"C. A.——Appoo.

Needless to say I paid the boy off, though I don't think he was himself anxious to go, and I shall miss his refined ways and his good English for a long time to come.

Whilst on this subject of native letters, I must copy one more. It was received by a friend of mine who had checked several overcharged items in her beef book. I give it verbatim excepting that I have altered the names, that my friend may not be identified. :—

"Respected Madam,

"We beg to inform your madamship that you "might have seen our letter of date regarding the "alterations which were made in the beef book.

"Yet it seems to us that your madamship going as "usual in altering the prices of article thereby.

"We beg your madamship to draw your special "attention to the fact that we are supplying you with "the best of articles as well as with the cheapest "price possible.

"The above mentioned fact your madamship can "easily understand if your madamship were to refer to "price lists of Messrs. F. & Co. and Messrs. M. & Co.

"Please note that we are charging the articles "according to our price-list and nothing more.

"Therefore under these circumstances that your "madamship will be very much pleased in not altering "the prices in the beef book in future, if such being the "case we shall be a great loser thereby, please note "the above.

"Yours faithfully,

"A. B. C. Nagoor & Co."

This matter of the beef book keeps the Ceylon housekeeper always in good fighting trim. The beef man sends a list of his prices to which for a time he adheres, but by degrees he begins his system of extortion. A cent here and two cents there are added on, and a few lbs. of meat more than you ordered are popped into the bill. These, if you are wise, you promptly repudiate, and write scathing remarks in your beef book (this part of the business I leave to Rob). The beef man then amends his ways and for a time all things go smoothly, until he thinks you have forgotten, and your suspicions are lulled to sleep, then once more prices go up, and the quality of the meat goes down, and the same old game of extortion and remonstrance begins again, until your patience is wearied out, and you leave him for someone else, probably only to find that your last case is worse than your first. When I first came out I was rather surprised to find how much the young men knew about the prices of household goods, but I now understand how a long course of trying to outwit the beef man, keeps them quite *au fait* with the current price of all they require.

CHAPTER XV

DECEMBER 28th.—Christmas has come, and gone. Not the snowy, blustering Christmas of northern latitudes, but a showery misty imitation, which is the best substitute Ceylon in the N. E. Monsoon can provide. Christmas Day this year, being on a Sunday, I decided to have my little party on Christmas Eve. We were all up betimes decorating the bungalow; the arched doorways and windows were outlined with fronds (some 3½ feet long) of the giant polipody fern, which grows abundantly in the gullies on the Estate; huge palm branches were fixed on the bare colour washed walls of the dining-room, whilst here and there bunches of red croton gave the suggestion of scarlet holly; the drawing-room decorations consisted entirely of sprays of bamboo, and bouquets of roses. The verandah, as usual, was full of pot plants, giant yams, caladiums, lilies, maiden-hair ferns of many varieties, and large pots of single pink balsam; so that the general effect of the

bungalow was a perfect bower of foliage and flowers. I must not forget to mention a curious native adornment which our "Appu" hung up in the archway between the two sitting-rooms. It consisted of a round stem (part of a banana tree) about 2½ feet long, depending from this and fastened into it at each end were nine half hoops made of the centre of young banana leaves, with trefoils cut out and left at regular intervals—the whole formed a graceful kind of lantern, in which during the evening a lighted candle burned.

The decorations being complete, and mid-day breakfast over, the whole household retired to their respective quarters for a much needed siesta. At three o'clock the first of our guests arrived, preceded as usual by a box coolie carrying the inevitable tin box containing his master's changes of raiment.

In these solitudes one really does sincerely welcome friends. After all, the human race is naturally gregarious, and one has only to retire to the wilds to find out the truth of that fact. If you have not seen a fellow creature of your own race for a fortnight, when you do meet him, you are ready to receive him with effusion, so we all met prepared to be pleased with each other's society. Tennis followed tea. When twilight came we passed a pleasant hour in the verandah listening to a

NATIVE HOUSE THATCHED WITH RICE STRAW. Plate XIII.

melodious voice and the sounds of a banjo, both the property of the musical member of the district.

At last the hour drew near for that time-honoured English ceremony,—the Christmas dinner. Of course the menu included the sacred turkey, plum pudding, mince pies, and crackers. Equally, of course, we all drank each other's health, and wished each other a happy Christmas. By this time the weather was all that could be wished. A lovely moon shone on palm and mango trees as we paced the terrace, enjoying the balmy tropical night. Our thoughts naturally turned to other scenes in dear old England, to other Christmases spent with those who loved us. A gentle silence fell on the merry group. Then one of the number, who had erstwhile been a chorister, broke out spontaneously into the sweet old carols "Noel," and "King Wenceslas" followed also quite spontaneously by the whole company singing with heart and soul "Hark, the herald angels," and "Come all ye faithful." It gave just the Christmas touch I wanted, and I felt as if even in our little corner of the earth we were permitted to join with Angels and Archangels and the vast company of heaven and earth, in the great and glorious Christmas Te Deum.

But this solemn mood did not last long. Rob's servant produced some unexpected

fireworks, which he had himself manufactured, and which proved a decided success. As I don't suppose any adventurous youth will read this book, I think I may venture to say they were made of saltpetre and sulphur mixed with powdered charcoal, rammed into the empty skin of an orange and kept down by a plug of earth, a match being inserted at the lower end of the orange. I am often struck by the clever way in which the Tamils utilise the ingredients they have at hand, and produce excellent results from such very simple means. We finished the evening with a mild gamble. Commerce, which I insisted upon as being especially Christmassy, and vingt-un followed each other. At midnight our guests left to continue their celebration next day at the house of another neighbour.

One reads in society papers that the custom of sending Christmas cards is dying out in England. However that may be, here they still hold their own. At home, where most people count their friends and acquaintances by the hundred, I can imagine that Christmas cards may become a tax both on time and money. The sending of them is a kindly custom, and I wish those thoughtful donors who sent their pretty missives to me could know how much they did to make my Christmas more homelike, in what, was once to me a land

of strangers, but in which I hope I now count many friends. One word I should wish to say to those in England who have relations in the Colonies. Be as generous as you can in the matter of Christmas numbers, new books if possible, magazines, if books are too expensive, and any little trifle that may amuse or make the season more cheerful. Be a little extravagant in ephemeral literature and postage. You do not know how the whitewashed walls of many a bungalow are brightened by the pictures which you perhaps would only throw away in a lumber room. To gaze perpetually at white-wash is not enlivening, and here there are no cheap prints or photographs to be bought such as you see everywhere at home. Prints there are plenty, but not at a price suitable for an S. D.'s salary. I speak of what I have seen—the eagerness with which the Christmas mail is awaited, the delight with which the home letters are read, and then the disappointment when the newspapers are glanced at and no Christmas number found amongst them. Your boys who are in exile here lead terribly monotonous lives of duty, for at least three hundred and fifty days out of the year. Do your very utmost to brighten even a few hours of this perpetual sameness. Above all, I would plead that they may always be made to feel there is a strong link of affection binding

them to the old home life and the home circle; strong enough to prevent their ever drifting away, whatever betides them here.

January 5th.—Even Ceylon planters are not quite without their seasons of gaiety, and the last week of the old year produced quite an outbreak of festivity at Kandy.

An afternoon reception at Government House. Three dances, a concert, a tennis tournament, and a gymkana, made quite a whirl in the little world of the mountain capital, and its surrounding districts, and gave food for conversation and meditation for many a a week.

All the social events were voted a success, but as far as the gymkana was concerned, viewed from my unprejudiced standpoint, it could be summed up in very few words. The prizes were first rate, and the performances not quite to match. Much too long an interval between the events. As a spectacle it was all that could be wished. The ground of the Kandy Sports' Club is a wedge of flat turf running up between wooded hills. On the lower slopes of these the native spectators range themselves, their white, and orange, and red garments looking in the distance like a huge parterre of bright coloured flowers. The meets are always held in the late afternoon, and the brilliant tropical sunset, and the pretty dresses of the ladies as

they stroll along the greensward, the better to see and be seen, makes a very vivid and striking picture, one that I am glad to have witnessed, and shall often think of on dull December days at home.

During the season numerous cricket and football matches are played on this ground, generally on Saturdays under the auspices of the Sports' Club. Superintendents of Estates cannot often find time to indulge in a match, but when they do, they thoroughly enjoy it, and have a merry time with both their friends and opponents.

New Year's Day falling also on a Sunday, I was glad to take the opportunity of once more attending a Church Service. The mid-day heat of the sun, makes it impossible for anyone living a few miles from a church to go there, the service being held at eleven o'clock, a most unsuitable hour for this climate. One sadly misses public religious worship, and all that it implies. I often wonder what kind of religion (if any) children of the second generation will develop who are brought up in outlying planting districts, where churches are few and far between, and where outward observances form so small a factor in most people's lives, although, of course, there are many honourable exceptions.

But to go back to St. Paul's Church, Kandy,

I was delighted to see so large a congregation at the early celebration at 7.15 A.M. True, the women predominated, but there was a good sprinkling of the masculine element, and here and there I rejoiced to see a few young planters who did not forget their mother's training in this far away land. Two native clergymen assisted the vicar, and there were numerous Sinhalese amongst the congregation, most of the native ladies wearing a scarf of spotted white net over their glossy black hair, but this was not universally the case. I was surprised to see so many natives attending an English Service as there are services in Sinhalese held for their special benefit. It shows that in the towns, at any rate, education must have made considerable strides.

The Church was delightfully airy, lancet shaped doors nearly the height of the nave take the place of windows, the double doors, excepting in wet, stormy weather are open during services, and thus every available breath of air finds its way into the Church. Outside, the ground allotted to St. Paul's is shaded by particularly fine spreading old trees, and under the shelter of their branches repose the rickshaw coolies and the hackery bulls with their drivers, all ready to convey their masters and mistresses home when Divine Service is ended. Both men and beasts are admirably quiet,

never a sound does one hear to disturb one's devotions. Strange development of time. Almost adjoining this Christian Church are the grounds of the great Buddhist Temple, the sacred shrine of Buddha's tooth. To many natives a spot so holy that pilgrims often arrive in Kandy from the different Buddhist countries of the Far East.

On my return I had rather a novel experience. I crossed the Mahavillagange river in a primitive kind of catamaran. I left the town early on Monday morning in a rick-shaw, which proved a most delightful mode of conveyance, my journey being mostly downhill. The morning air was unusually cool, my coolie ran down to the Ferry (five and a half miles) in less than an hour. These rickshaw coolies are fine athletic looking men, but they are said to die early owing to over strained hearts. As I expected my hackery to meet me on the other side, I paid my rickshaw coolie his fare, the small sum that equals one and sixpence of English money and embarked in the very primitive boat. Imagine the trunk of a big jungle tree about two and a half feet wide and perhaps twelve feet long scooped out in the centre, across which battens are nailed to act as seats, not one atom of freeboard is left above the seats and very little between them and the water. From one side of the trunk and at

each end, pieces of bent wood project, and are attached to a long spar resting in the water. This is to give the necessary stability.

I looked rather aghast, and wondered how I was ever going to get in, without capsizing the boat; however, this feat was at last accomplished with the help of the venerable looking ferrymen, and much to the amusement of a gaping crowd of natives who only waited for me to be seated to take possession of the other vacant places. I must say it was a very curious sensation to feel oneself out in the middle of the broad swift river in so narrow a craft, that the slightest unexpected jerk or movement would land one in the water, and I think another time I should prefer to cross on the safe but ugly raft to which I am accustomed.

When in Kandy I visited the shop of a well-known native jeweller by name Casa Lebbe, who showed me a most tempting collection of unset gems. Amongst others, sapphires of many shades, rubies, pink garnets, moonstones, tourmalines, amethysts, spinnels, and chrisoberyls. White sapphires when well cut, have very much the sparkle of diamonds and something of the yellow tinge of Brazilian diamonds. I was shown lovely necklaces of native manufacture and design, gems merely encircled in a rim of gold depending from a coil of twisted gold-wire, others again of lightly set jewels forming a

riviere long enough to encircle the neck. The cheapness of these beautiful ornaments astonished me, Rs150 (or at present rate of exchange)—£10 would procure a ruby or sapphire necklet whilst, for from Rs40 to Rs100 (£3 to £7) you could get rings of sapphire, ruby, or any of the stones I have named. Native shopkeepers are always open to "a deal," so I should strongly advise visitors to Ceylon to bring with them any gold jewellery that they have become tired of, or that has got damaged or broken. A good price can always be obtained for the gold and credited in their favour in the purchase of new jewellery. The shops are full of Queensland opals, which the Australian passengers tire of, and exchange for Ceylon gems.

The common custom here is to buy up sovereigns, and unset stones, and then to have them made into jewellery by the natives, according to your own design. There is no mint law against defacing coins, so the sovereigns are melted down, as the readiest way of obtaining gold; and it is quite a common occurrence to see in the newspaper lists of wedding presents in Burgher and Sinhalese circles, so many sovereigns from Mr. So and So.

JANUARY 7th.—Just at this time of the year we are visited every day at sunset by hundreds of flying foxes. These extraordinary little

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bird-beasts have a head and body exactly like a miniature fox, barring the tail, where the tail should be, the huge bat wings end. They are destructive to fruit and vegetables, and are therefore a prey to the guns of the Estate watchmen who shoot and sell them for food to the coolies. Strange to say, the flesh of flying foxes is much prized by people who would not on any consideration eat a squirrel.

We are astonished to find to what a height in the sky they can rise, in spite of the size and weight of their body. We often watch their flight up, up into the air, till they appear a mere speck in the sky. Their home here is on an island in the middle of the Mahavillagange, to which it is to be presumed they retire in the daytime for we never see them until just before sunset. At day dawn they have again disappeared. Last night I heard the horrible cry of the devil bird, a most weird sound just like a human being in mortal agony, a sound which has a piercing poignancy that would penetrate through any number of more common-place noises.

CHAPTER XVI

January 14th.—The Festival of Thai Pongal has come round once more. It was kept by the coolies this year on the 12th and 13th inst. The Lines, being some distance from the bungalow, we were not disturbed by their festivities, although we heard distant tom-toms betokening that the revels were in full swing somewhere. The first day Rob spent playing golf on a neighbour's links, whilst I amused myself at home, taking care to confine my wanderings to the garden, lest perchance, if I went further afield, I might meet some too ardent devotee of the Arrack Tavern, which to the annoyance of the planters on this group of Estates, is situated only about a mile away. The great idea of many of the coolies on these occasions is to get drunk, and every effort is made to prevent arrack being brought into the Lines. The second day we remained at home, and were visited in the afternoon by a party of dancers, one was dressed to represent the devil ;

his body was painted in green and white, and on his head he wore a cap representing horns, and wings. The other dancer had a bow and arrow, with which to shoot the demon, who continually beckoned him away but evaded the arrow. At last after a good deal of bye-play, the bow and arrow were snatched away, and the owner of them shot dead, lying limp at full length on the ground. The devil then took him up with his teeth by his loin cloth, and lifted him some yards away, a veritable *tour de foree* for the victim was a strong built young fellow. After this he suddenly revived, snatched the weapon from the devil, and drove him away vanquished. All the movements were accompanied by the deafening noise of tom-toms, so that we were quite glad when the time came when we could politely dismiss the party with the usual "santhosem."

No sooner had they departed, than another set appeared. This consisted of two families, who said they had brought their children to salaam to us, really an excuse for getting a little present for the children, who were a boy and girl of about the age of four and two years. It was a truly comic sight to see the mothers, who were covered with jewellery, take up the children, and push them down with their faces touching the ground, this they did two or three times; rather reminding me of the way in which

I have seen a strong minded bathing woman dip poor frightened babies in the sea. The dress of the little creatures added much to the comicality, for the boy was clad from head to foot in a suit of orange and black broad striped flannelette, made on the pattern of pyjamas; and the girl wore a very long cotton frock, of the most approved pink colour. Next day, we had a visit with which I was much gratified. Our visitors were the little garden boy I had employed at Raneetotem, and the runaway coolie whom I before mentioned as having been brought there in handcuffs, and for whose good conduct Rob made himself responsible. They brought with them offerings of fruit and vegetables. Five months is a long time to live in the mind of a coolie, and I was very pleased that they had taken the trouble to walk twelve miles to pay us a visit. January 15th found the holiday ended and all once more busy at work, at least all who had feasted wisely and not too well.

This morning Virapen Kangany's Lines have been in a state of commotion. In his room was found an evil charm hidden by some enemy; and all the coolies are fully convinced that a great disaster will befall him, though I don't think he himself is much alarmed. Rob begged that he might have it to bring to me as a curiosity. The charm consists of two dirty little

bits of bark about one and a half inches long by one inch broad, one bit has a Sinhalese, the other a Tamil inscription. In addition to these there are a few pigs bristles tied up with a little bit of coir, and a splinter of white wood about the size of a match, supposed to represent a needle. These were all tied up in a very dirty bit of rag, which I discarded, and they all now fit into a small match-box.

When anyone wishes to do his neighbour an injury, he places one of these charms either in, or just outside, his Lines, even burying them does not destroy the efficacy of the charm, which is supposed to produce madness, or some other horrible misfortune.

I must here give an instance of how the superstitious nature of the native is worked upon to his detriment by the priests. For some time we have noticed the great scarceness, and difficulty of obtaining, poultry and eggs. When I first went to Raneetotem a year ago, the villagers constantly brought cages of live chickens for sale, the price varying according to size from three to four rupees a dozen. We could also obtain any amount of eggs for thirty-seven cents a dozen. Now we never see such a thing as a cage of chickens, a full grown fowl is seventy-five cents instead of fifty cents, and eggs are fifty cents a dozen, and difficult to get even at that price. The reason of all this is

that last year the priests went about amongst the people telling them that the end of the world was coming,—and with this awful event impending, it would be very wrong to set hens, or to make preparations for the future. In some instances the "goyas" even neglected to sow their paddy fields, but happily the bulk of the villagers, although still expecting a catastrophe, keep at the same time a weather eye open to this world, as it is now constituted. As nothing remarkable happened in November the prophets postponed the event. When the date arrived our Appu brought a mat and insisted upon sleeping outside his master's door, saying he was going to take care of master, but really the mortal terror was for his own safety.

"The Ceylon Standard" in its column of country news from local correspondents often had allusions to the subject. I copy a paragraph which appeared under the head of Galle news:—

"Meretorious Acts.—Almsgiving and preach-
"ing of 'Bana and Perit' are indulged in by
"the inhabitants of that place in anticipation
"that the end of the world would soon come,
"as predicted, but for all this, there is no visible
"reform in morality amongst the poorer classes."

It reminds one of what history records of the time in the twelfth century, when the fair

fields of England were left barren in dread expectations of the same event.

JANUARY 20th.—A gang of twenty new coolies arrived yesterday with their Kangany. They are fresh from the Indian coast, and looked bewildered at their new surroundings, as well as way-worn and weary, having walked many miles to reach this Estate. The two women appeared so utterly exhausted that I longed to give them some refreshment, but alas! they were of so high a caste that they would have scorned to partake of anything from our bungalow, so nothing could I do, except watch the curious procession file past, the Kangany leading the way, whilst some fine strong men, carrying on their heads all the worldly goods of the party, brought up the rear. Some of the coolies carried little children on their shoulders, or astride on their hips, whilst others had fowls of nondescript character under their arms. One old crone was scarcely human in her ugliness, but poor creature, one's heart went out to her in compassion, for she appeared almost too tired to put one foot before the other.

When once settled down in Ceylon the Indian coolie finds himself much better off than at home. Here, he gets regular wages, good Lines to live in, medical attendance, and, (on a cocoa estate,) plenty of firewood, jak fruit,

ROADSIDE HUT AND COOLY WITH BEEFBOX.

Plate XIV.

chilies, and other curry stuffs, all free of charge, with a climate (at all events in the low country) not very dissimilar to his own.

Ceylon is in fear of the plague being introduced into the island, and therefore for three weeks after arrival, new coolies from Southern India are under careful observation, preparatory to isolation, should the least symptom of the dreaded malady appear. Added to which, the important step has been taken by government of closing the great north road, the main artery by which most of the immigrants arrive in the planting districts. For t present all immigration is by sea, and a most rigid inspection takes place at the ports. Plague stations have been selected in various central and convenient situations; the district medical officers have had portable hospitals sent for their disposal: the village headman and Superintendents of Estates have had printed government instructions given them how to act in case of an outbreak; and we trust that every human precaution having been taken, we may be preserved from the awful scourge taking root in Ceylon, as it has done in India.

January is a charming month so far as climate is concerned. We have cool mornings with the thermometer often below 70°, the temperature for a few hours in the middle of the day rises

to 80°, and then gradually lowers until, at four o'clock in the afternoon, it is cool enough to make a brisk walk or game of tennis quite enjoyable. This month is a busy month on a cocoa Estate. Crop is coming in fast, and has to be cured during summer weather out on the barbecue, which gives it the best colour; when damp and cloudy, in the clarehue on matting coarse enough to admit of the heated air passing freely through. Our store which a few weeks ago was stacked with coffee, is now full to repletion with cocoa.

In addition to picking and curing cocoa, lopping is now again in full swing. For this work Sinhalese are usually employed; they are excellent woodmen, understanding thoroughly the wood craft of their native forests, and can climb like monkeys. Cocoa will not crop under dense shade which also favours the development of pod disease. The growth of forest trees is so rapid, that lopping has to be annually, and in some degree bi-annually undertaken. This is also the season for manuring the plants, and for preparing the holes in which during the South West Monsoon supplies will be planted to take the place of the cocoa bushes, that have fallen victims to drought or disease. So altogether it is a busy time, and it is well that the cool North East Monsoon weather enables the work to be done

without the exhaustion which would follow the same amount of exertion in the hot weather.

Yesterday afternoon we had a party of schoolboys from St. Edward's school, Newera Eliya, to tea and tennis. They are spending their holidays with friends and relations in this neighbourhood, and a more gentlemanly well-mannered set of boys it would be impossible to meet, they would do credit to any English public school training, without the expense and trouble of going to England. This school is in a lovely and most healthy situation, an excellent tone pervades among the boys, and games are much encouraged, as I had the benefit yesterday of seeing, for our guests quite distinguished themselves at tennis, especially a small boy of nine who played quite well enough to make a fourth in a good game, without points being allowed him. The same youngster plays an excellent game of croquet and billiards, but this last accomplishment was taught him by his father and not at school. In my opinion, unless a boy is delicate, and in that case requires the bracing air of Europe supposing he is eventually to become a planter, it is far better for him to be educated at St. Edwards amongst those who will be his future friends and compeers, than to go home to school in England, where he will lose the continuity of his Ceylon life, learn tastes

which cannot be gratified, and make friends from whom he must eventually be parted. The Europeans here are to be congratulated on having such a good school as St. Edwards on the island, and should do their utmost to avail themselves of its advantages for their sons, and thus give it an amount of financial support, sufficient to enable the management to provide masters trained at English universities, and so keep abreast with the best educational methods of the day.

I have before mentioned the clever way in which coolies make use of the simple means at their disposal. I was much struck yesterday by an instance in point. Going down with Rob past the cart shed I saw some crooked looking branches heaped on the ground, each piece four or five feet long. He told me they were part of a jungle creeper which the men bark and then divide into longitudinal narrow strips, these are beaten into shape, even wetted if necessary, and form the tough so-called "jungle-rope," with which all the vanilla fencing is tied and also by which all our verandah flower basket-are suspended. It is strong enough to bear a heavy weight, is quite as tough, and does not rot nearly as soon as coir rope.

Just as children, where toy shops are non-existent, make their playthings of stones, and

broken shards, and the hundred and one things at their own door, so do we in the dearth of organised amusements divert ourselves with anything which may be a little out of the daily routine. This afternoon Rob and I have been much entertained by watching the vagaries of some young bulls being broken in to go in a hackery. When about two years old their education begins, first a light rope is passed through the nose, over the top of the head and tied securely at the side of the face, to this eventually the rope reins are adjusted and by it the bull is guided, (I must say, not very effectually guided). When the slit in the nostril is quite healed the training begins.

A light hackery is secured, the bull with many pushes and shouts is at last induced to enter the shafts, the yoke is fitted to the hump, the best and most fearless driver mounts the box, and the coolies place themselves on either side of the shafts, and two more at the back, all to exercise enough pressure to keep the hackery straight. Then begin a series of jumps and rushes on the part of the unfortunate and bewildered animal, generally ending in a furious gallop which it takes all the fleetness and the strength of the coolies to keep pace with, and to keep the vehicle on the right track. Sometimes the proceedings are varied by the young bull taking an obstinate fit, putting down

his head, even trying to lie down, and utterly declining to budge an inch, but a judicious prick with a sharp stick, and moving the wheels soon brings him to his bearings. It is really wonderful with a little patience and regular exercise, how soon they become docile; but even the best and quietest of bulls is liable to attacks of obstinacy, then the wearisomeness of sitting behind them is only equalled by the wearisomeness of driving them.

CHAPTER XVII

January 28th.—For weeks past the principal topic of conversation has been the expected arrival of a magnificent casket presented by the Buddhists of Burmah to the great temple in Kandy, for the purpose of enshrining Buddha's tooth. The money for this valuable shrine has been many years collecting, and the costly undertaking which appealed to the religious enthusiasm of the Burmese was only lately accomplished. Two thousand Burmese pilgrims came over to take part in the presentation, and to visit the various spots held sacred by their co-religionists in Ceylon, including Adams Peak, and Anaradhapura. These pilgrims had amongst them the High Priest of Burmah, a very rich old lady said to be possessed of £250,000 pounds, five princesses, and many noblemen, and other ladies and gentlemen, with their retinue. While on pilgrimage they demanded no special privileges, excepting that when in

Ceylon the most distinguished travelled first class. Otherwise, from religious motives, they discarded for the time being all social distinctions mixing freely with the other pilgrims, regardless of rank and willingly undergoing the unavoidable amount of discomfort of a crowded ship, and other drawbacks incidental to the movement of masses of people.

A Ceylonese Reception Committee was formed, who arranged that the visitors should all be hospitably entertained both at Colombo and Kandy. The casket was brought over in several pieces and put together in Ceylon, the Customs' Duty alone amounted to Rs5500, which was paid by a devout Ceylon gentleman. A number of extra jewels, rubies, brilliants, sapphires, catseyes, &c., were also given by Sinhalese, these were incorporated in the shrine when it was finally put together in Colombo. The value of the casket is now said to amount to sixty thousand pounds; a sum which speaks volumes for the religious enthusiasm of the donors, — the Burmese people.

The distance from the station to the Temple is not more than half a mile, part of the road lying along the shore of Kandy lake. The casket was carried in a glass case on poles, preceded by three fine elephants dressed in Perahera fashion, and immediately followed by

the Burmese High Priest, who had it in charge. The crowd was enormous and one fatal accident occurred, which was much to be regretted. For some days past this magnificent shrine has been exhibited for a few hours daily in the Band Stand on the Public Green. Hearing that yesterday Buddha's tooth was also to be on view at the Temple, a concession which is usually only accorded when Royalty pays a visit to the Island, I hastened into Kandy to gratify my curiosity, and to see all that was going on.

As soon as we reached the public road, we came upon groups of villagers dressed in their best clothes, wending their way to Kandy. The ferry was crowded with them, and the first glimpse of the town itself reminded me of the great August Perahera excepting that happily the merry-go-round, phonograph, cinematograph, etc., etc., were conspicuous by their absence, but the same booths with native refreshments and the same maimed beggars lined the way. The temple walls had once more their frieze of yellow draped priests, and brightly clad secular spectators, and a grand Pandal stood before the principal entrance of the Dalada Maligawa.

The band-stand was extended by broad overhanging eaves of Talipot palm, and on each side of it temporary open structures were raised,

and elegantly decorated. In these, during the early part of the day, I saw a number of priests being hospitably fed, with large plates of what appeared to me to be a mixture of native cakes, rice and plantains ; later on, the precious casket took their place.

It is in the shape of a Burmese Pagoda, and at the top is a ruby worth Rs2000 (£140). The body of the casket is of gold, in which some very precious gems, and numbers of lesser value are encrusted.

This costly object is surmounted by a canopy of silver also inlaid with precious stones which many people think more beautiful than the casket itself.

Two smaller gold shrines, already in the possession of the Temple were also exhibited, but I was disappointed in these, for although they were about two and a half and three feet in height with six rows of gems encircling each, they were so dirty and the gold so tarnished, that the whole thing looked tawdry, and it was very difficult to realise that the large square cut jewels were not shams.

After visiting the band-stand I proceeded with a friend to the Temple itself, to view the Tooth. The crowd outside was immense, but when once the portals were passed, and the moat crossed, good order, and a clear pathway, were kept by a detachment of Ceylon Police,

who were on duty in charge of an Inspector. Being the only Europeans present, the police kindly allowed my friend and me to leave the throng, and go up the stair of egress instead of ingress, which was densely packed, and so after passing through an ancient archway and up a flight of stone steps worn away by the feet of many generations of pilgrims, we quickly found ourselves in a kind of central hall, in which a number of Burmese were lying prostrate on their faces worshipping before the tooth.

The interior of the hall had been profusely decorated for the occasion, the design which struck me most was an arch in white and red cloth folded into shapes intended to resemble stucco mouldings, very effective and quaint, seen in the artificial light which alone penetrates this sanctum, and a typical Kandyan form of decoration. At one end of the hall, on a raised platform, which was protected by a strong wooden barrier, on a gold stand covered with a glass shade we beheld the sacred tooth. A long black tusk supported in a light framework of precious metal. Anything more ugly it would be difficult to imagine, and it passes comprehension how such a thing can be the object of adoration of millions of our fellow subjects.

We quickly saw enough, the Temple interior being familiar both to myself and my friend, we

therefore, descended into the open air, by the way we had come, very thankful to escape from the overpowering scent of cocoanut oil, masses of sickly sweet floral offerings, spices, and above all, dense throngs of over-heated humanity.

I fell deeply in love with the Burmese ladies, whom I met in the streets of Kandy. They had such gentle, intellectual faces, with a great air of refinement, and good breeding. Their pretty dresses—silk skirts with full, short jackets, and well dressed glossy hair, added much to their attractiveness ; but I am sorry to say some of them were smoking long cheroots. The lower classes of the Burmese pilgrims were certainly not beautiful, broad flat faces, and square unwieldy figures appeared to be their distinguishing traits ; though I must confess they nearly all looked intelligent and good-tempered. The ladies trotted in and out of the jewellers and curiosity shops evidently making purchases to take home as mementos of their pilgrimage.

I, too, went in search of curiosities, to carry away with me, notably a kind of coarse pottery, which is to be obtained in the open shops in the native portion of the town and reminds me somewhat of Breton pottery. The shopkeepers, much to my amusement, always recommended their European wares. "This, very good lady, best London make." I secured several cups

and saucers of grey ware, Japanese or Chinese (I don't know which) for the equivalent of 2d a cup, and saucers and basins of the same for 3d each. Another day I got a small basin from a native caddy in Dumbera for sixpence. It had a border of a particularly good blue, and was enriched by sprigs of roses, in delicate tints of pink and yellow. I could fill a crate with this uncommon and decorative pottery, were it not for the expense of freight and the risk of breakage.

JANUARY 30th.—We are having an uncomfortable experience common to England as well as Ceylon. We are at this moment minus a cook! The faithful servant who has been so many years with my son left us two days ago to be married. We all thought a satisfactory substitute had been provided, but he did not appear as he promised, so we are at the mercy of the kitchen coolie, and a young horse-keeper (groom) who has some taste for cooking, and has often watched the "boy" at work. I ransacked Kandy for a cook, but without avail, not a single servant was disengaged owing to the influx of Burmese visitors. Even the servants' registry, which by the way is a government institution, and abides under the roof of the police barracks, had not a single name on its books, so there is nothing for it but to put up with very plain living until our servant returns from his honeymoon, in ten days' time.

The wedding feast is to extend over three days and it is to cost him 100 rupees (£7) part of which has to be borrowed at high interest, but it is thought *de rigeur*, and he prefers to start in life crippled by debt rather than to do without the customary great Tamasha. The present to his bride is to be an English sovereign (15 rupees in value) with which to make some small article of jewellery. The servants when married have a room or rooms allotted to them in the nearest Lines to the Bungalow, where the wife lives, and the husband retires to, when the day's work is over.

An amusing incident has just occurred. Tamil men rejoice in very long hair, which often reaches to their waist: this they let down after bathing and often when travelling, but Bungalow servants and horsekeepers are supposed to have short hair, as looking smarter, and being more cleanly. Rob has long been trying to persuade his young horsekeeper to be cropped, but hitherto without avail. He is a sensitive kind of boy, and fears being a laughing stock. However, to-day the barber appeared on one of his periodical visits. Rob happened to be at home, and insisted upon the deed being done. Poor Marimutu has lost all his beautiful hair, but looks all the smarter in consequence.

Sometimes coolies have their long hair cut

in order that they may present it as a religious offering at the Saami-house. Also it is etiquette to have their heads shaved in token of mourning for the loss of either father or mother. My little garden coolie at Raneetotem kept his head closely shaved for six months after his mother's death; but as a rule they are very proud of their long tresses.

FEBRUARY 2nd.—An unusual amount of rain has fallen lately. The rainfall for January reached the total of eleven inches, more than a third of the whole rainfall (on this Estate) for last year, which was thirty inches. Dumbera is a dry district, therefore we welcome rain with great joy more especially in January, for it starts us on the hot months of February, March and April, with water in the wells, and moist cool ground. Our amount of rain, although a good deal for Dumbera, is not to be compared to what they have had in some districts. My friends in East Matale had forty inches last month.

You in England, where the average annual rainfall is only thirty and thirty-five inches can hardly realise what this means to us. No less than rusty keys, musty flour, matches that won't light, dripping ceilings, mildewed shoes and boots, every article of clothing (even those in the almirahs) damp, and even wet, the woodwork breaking out into heads of dew, flabby note-

paper, and the stamps all sticking together; an odour of mildew and must prevading everything. Added to this, in the low country we have no fireplaces, so we have patiently and cheerfully to bide our time, until on the first sunny day, we can turn all our goods and chattels into the garden, where a few hours in the dry air and sunshine makes everything once more sweet and wholesome.

The flying foxes, of which we had lately such myriads, have now quite disappeared. I suppose they have retired to their island home in the river.

FEBRUARY 3rd.—A flutter and a shudder have passed through our little household. I had just finished my afternoon tea in the verandah, and was sitting watching the garden coolie water the pot plants, when suddenly he came to a dead stop in front of a stand of ferns, about three yards from my chair, and took to his heels without saying a word. I thought he had become suddenly demented, but when he returned a moment afterwards accompanied by the other servants armed with sticks I quickly took in the situation—A cobra no less! It lay between the pots of fern, darting up its head, and shooting out its tongue at the approach of its enemy. A gun was quickly brought and the creature shot in the neck. It was not killed, but wriggled on to the ground

where it was finally despatched by blows from the sticks, but it appeared to be extraordinarily tenacious of life.

This cobra had been seen several times in the neighbourhood of the Bungalow, but had always managed to get away, so there was great rejoicing over its destruction. It made me shudder to think how easily one of us might have been bitten, whilst unsuspiciously tending the ferns, and very thankful that we had all escaped so well. Cobras are supposed to go about in pairs, when you kill one, another soon appears in the same place, so it behoves us for a time to be extra watchful. Whilst on the subject of cobras—I must insert a very amusing letter copied from the "Ceylon Observer." It was written by a Babu to the Editor of the "Upper Burma Gazette," as follows :—

(To the Editor *Upper Burma Gazette.*)

Sir,—I should like to bring to notice of public through widely scattered columns of your valuable journal a peradventure that overtook my personality whilst taking nocturnal perambulations on the West Moat Road in order to caution fellow citizens against simultaneous danger. Whilst wending my way along abovesaid thoroughfare in the evening of the 22nd ultimo, and pursuing a course as crow flies towards my humble domicile, I was suddenly and instantaneously confronted with monstrous hissing and much confounded in immediate vicinity. I first remained

sotto voce, and then applying close scrutiny of my double optics to the spot whence proceeded above said disturbance I was much horrified and temporaneously paralysed to lo! and behold a mighty enormous reptile of Cobra-de-Capello making frontal attack. My pedal appendages being only clothed in wooden sandals; I thereupon immediately took to nether limbs and beat hasty retreat(as stated in war telegrams) or in other words made rapid retrograde movement by locomotion of lower shanks, though personally much courageous. I should like to indignantly question—what are newly selected City Fathers cogitating that they should not take commensurate steps to relegate such carnivorous animals to limbo oblivion and insure safety of pedestrians and footpads? Please answer me this inscrutable question, famous Sir? Praying for welfare and increase of filial bond. I am. I am, most obedient Sir, your ever obedient servant, BABU CHOWDRY BOSE.

N.B.—If this epistle is consigned to wastepaper basket and no notice taken of my humble complaint, I shall memoriate in other papers.—*M. Mail*, Jan. 27.

A few days later we had a most interesting visit from two snake-charmers—who undertook to catch any snakes that might lurk round the bungalow. Another cobra had been seen in some grass, but below the flower garden, so we were glad to let them try, first stipulating that unless snakes were found and caught, they would receive no payment. Every precaution was taken to ensure that they did not themselves place the snakes where they were after-

wards found, and they were watched from the time they came within a mile of the Bungalow, and were never lost sight of for a moment, until they had finished their work. They brought with them a bag containing two cobras caught elsewhere; this bag was tightly fastened and watched by some of our own servants. The charmers' dress was so scanty that it would have been impossible for them to conceal about their persons the large snakes they afterwards caught. The men were very unkempt looking Tamils—said to belong, as do the other snake-charmers, to a tribe of Indian gipsies, who inherit this extraordinary power.

The business arrangement being completed, the elder man stepped forward, accompanied by his assistant, and followed by Rob and myself and four Bungalow servants to the piece of waste land covered with grass and cheddy, where the cobra had been seen. Arrived at the spot, the leader danced forward with a light springy step—best described by the old-fashioned phrase "on the light fantastic toe"—a step one might imagine elves and fairies tripping—so light were his movements that scarce a blade of grass bent beneath his airy tread; meanwhile, he played little trilling tunes on a peculiarly sweet reed pipe— the music being supposed to attract the snake. We were all perfectly silent, and Rob and I were

just beginning to vote the whole thing humbug when behold a movement and a rustle in the long grass—with a sharp exclamation the snake-charmer made a dart forward, and drew forth a large cobra, holding it by the neck. I am quite certain it was all bona-fide, for our men never took their eyes off the man and his assistant, and even accompanied the latter when he took the cobra to place it in the bag with the others.

The same performance was repeated three times more, in different places round the bungalow—with the result that another cobra and two tic polongas (also a dangerous snake) were caught. During the capture of the last a most exciting incident happened. The assistant, who we were afterwards told was rather new to the work, in catching the snake took hold of it in the wrong place, and it bit him on the finger. His terror and pain were great, and I was much frightened myself, for I knew the bite of a tic polonga was supposed to mean death in half an hour. The older man at once made the wound bleed freely, and then applied two snake-stones over the bite, twisting a piece of string tightly round the finger below the place bitten. A snake-stone is a small piece of animal charcoal, polished until it looks like a dark green pebble; whether it is rubbed with an antidote or otherwise treated, I cannot

say—but twice I have seen its efficacy proved. I only wish that doctors would not be too proud to study the subject.

The man was evidently in great agony, and at this stage, I must confess I took myself off, as there were plenty of people to attend to him, and I thought every moment he would die. Rob gave him some whiskey, and awaited events.

In about twenty minutes, I heard the sweet little trills of the pipe once more, and on going out, found the invalid quite recovered, though looking rather shaky, and the two men hunting for more snakes; no more, however, were found. Before going away they said they wished to give us a little performance, which meant letting the four cobras and two tic polongas creep and crawl about the yard almost up to our feet, then catching and throwing them from one hand to the other, and letting them crawl up to us again, and so *da capo.* As the bite of either would be deadly, it was a gruesome entertainment, even with snake-stones at hand, so we soon said we had had enough. Rob gave them R. 10; they presented him with a snake-stone, and departed carrying the snakes with them.

CHAPTER XVIII

February 14th.—Owing to ignorant noncompliance with some legal regulations, the marriage of our Appu could not take place on the date originally fixed; and it was only yesterday that the ceremony was really performed, in the Roman Catholic Church at Kandy. In the early afternoon, as I sat working in the verandah, I was startled by the approach of the bridal procession. First came the bride and bridegroom, hand in hand, followed by a little girl of six, in the inevitable pink frock made very long, with a veil of needle-run net hanging from the back of her head; beside the girl walked a particularly sharp boy of ten, in white jacket and cloth, and embroidered velvet cap; and behind them came two women—one the aunt in a heliotrope silk cloth and beautiful jewellery—the other the mother who being a widow was quite enveloped—head included—in white muslin.

The bride's dress was extremely picturesque,

a cloth of red brocaded silk, with border of orange and green, worn Tamilwise, over a low short-sleeved bodice of red silk shot with yellow. Her hair was dressed in one long thick plait, fastened off with three bell shaped gold ornaments, whilst on the crown of her head she wore a round bossed gold ornament about three inches in diameter, two similar but smaller discs being fastened on the plait of hair. In addition, she had very handsome side combs, a row of pink garnets with fringes of seed pearls; also massive gold ear-rings, three nose-rings, the centre one a fine pink garnet—two rosaries of gold beads—several rings, and particularly pretty Indian filagree work bracelets. Over all this grandeur she wore a white tulle veil, just like an English bride, but was kind enough to take it off that I might inspect the jewellery which was shown me with great pride by the aunt, who happily came from Madras, and could speak English. The poor girl herself was quite overwhelmed with shyness and never once lifted up her head or uttered a word.

The bridegroom, in spite of its being a broiling hot afternoon, wore over his shoulder a thick woollen shawl of the most hideous red and blue plaid conceivable. I am sure no loom in Great Britain could produce such a terrible combination of the two colours, its birthplace

must have been Germany. Later when I saw him for a moment without the ladies, I asked him if he did not find it very hot; "Oh yes, lady, it is very hot, but I must wear it; it is part of my wedding dress." A very incongruous part, I thought to myself, for the rest was a pretty white muslin cloth with narrow border of crimson and gold, a white linen jacket, and sapphire blue velvet cap embroidered with silver.

Unfortunately Rob was at work on the Estate, and so the whole burden of entertainment fell upon me; and greatly at a loss I was to know what to do. I gave a santhosem (present), took them into the drawing-room and showed them pictures of England, which seemed to interest, gave them cakes, and finally made a bouquet for the bride. I picked roses, but the aunt came running after me, to say that chrysanthemums were what the Tamils prized most. At last I made an excuse that I must write letters, and dismissed them to the kitchen regions to have a cup of tea, where by this time the kitchen coolie had made two enormous wreaths of Bongainvillea, which he insisted upon their wearing round their necks. At last Rob returned to the bungalow, and soon afterwards the party pursued their onward way to the girl's home, where a wedding feast was prepared for twenty

COUNTRY ROAD—WITH BULLOCK HACKERY. Plate XVI.

people. Our servants gave us some dinner, and then hurried off to join the festivities, leaving us to the care of a watchman, who mounted guard over the bungalow, whilst we slept.

Yesterday, besides being the wedding day, was a great Mahomedan Festival of Ramadan. No sooner had the bride departed than a young Moor boy, whom we are training to be a servant, arrived with a small brother and sister, all bearing gifts—a parcel of Jaffna cheroots for Rob, and pomegranites, bananas, and eggs for me. We had let him go away to attend Ramadan at great inconvenience to ourselves, and I suppose this was his parents' way of showing their gratitude. He did a most unusual thing for a native—refused to accept a santhosem in return for his gifts, saying when he brought a present he didn't want to be paid for it. Generally the dark race is most rapacious, and I shall always respect this boy for his proper pride and disinterestedness.

During the last few months I have been so much at the mercy of non-English speaking servants, that I have perforce learnt enough Tamil to give orders, and to ask for what I want. When I do not know a word, I make signs, the meaning of which the natives are extraordinarily quick to catch. The other day I felt supremely ridiculous when, after trying in

vain to ask for a small nail with which to fasten some fringe, I at last took Abdul to a wall and showed him one, and he exclaimed to his fellow servant in Tamil, "Oh, it's *tintacks* she wants," using the proper English word. There is no Tamil equivalent for many manufactured articles, and the English word with a Tamily pronunciation is used.

Anyone coming to Ceylon should set to work at once to learn this language for a knowledge of it will add much not only to the comfort, but to the interest of his life. Even the few words I have picked up are a great help to me. Sinhalese is not necessary for a lady in the planting districts, as she very seldom comes in contact with Sinhalese natives. It is, of the two, much the prettier language, and has a soft liquid sound of the Italian type, very pleasant to listen to. The two races keep quite distinct, and it is not very often one finds a Tamil coolie who speaks Sinhalese.

FEBRUARY 25th.—To-day, amongst much shouting and vociferation on the part of the cattle-shed coolies, the working bullocks have been undergoing their monthly shoeing. I say undergoing with reason, for to them it must be a trying process. They are first thrown, then their four feet are tied together with a strong rope, a sack filled with grass being placed under the feet to support and slightly raise them, a

coolie sits at the beast's head and another at his tail, and then the blacksmith swiftly and skilfully proceeds with his work. Bullock follows bullock, until all have passed through his hands, and as he is paid fifty cents (one shilling) per head, where the Estate is of any size, he makes a good day's pay.

The roads are hard and stony, it is therefore absolutely necessary that the bulls should be shod, but it is much to be wished that some other plan than that of throwing the poor animals could be invented, for they are apt to get strained, and otherwise injured, in their efforts to escape the ordeal of shoeing; but as yet no one has discovered an alternative method.

March 4th.—The weather has now become intensely hot in the middle of the day, but the mornings and evenings are still cool. Heavy dews refresh the garden and the grassfields, and as yet they keep their freshness. The deciduous trees, of which there are many, are changing their leaves, and the birds sing in the early morning and late afternoon, so one is in a measure reminded of springtime in England.

March 5th.—We have been to a picnic—a real English tea picnic—but with variations. I must really describe it. Some kind neighbours determined to give an Australian lady

and myself the opportunity of seeing a very old Hindu Temple, just outside the village of Galmadua, situated four or five miles from Kandy. They arranged to have tea in the Temple enclosure, so one very hot afternoon, having rendezvoused at the nearest bungalow, we all sallied forth to Galmadua; some in smart dog-carts, some on horseback, and some in comfortable, shaded bullock hackerys, a box containing the good things, and a large kettle tied under the principal hackery, were suggestive of the object in hand. All the guests were attended by their horsekeepers, each wearing the distinctive colours of his master.

Our drive was for the most part over rocky, narrow roads bordered with cocoa and coffee bushes, and shaded by cocoanut and areca palms, whilst through the slender stems we had glimpses on all sides of fine mountain ranges, pearly grey, and violet in the already waning afternoon sunshine. After about a couple of miles we reached a grassy enclosure or compound, well shaded by cocoanut palms. The centre was occupied by the Hindu Temple we had come to see, a square building of grey stone, five stories high; each storey somewhat smaller than the one below, until the last tapered to a point. The lowest must, I think, originally have been a cloister, as it projects beyond the main building, and consisted of

a series of arched windows, though no roof remains. The interior square structure is windowless and tapers inwards, the brickwork being so arranged that each layer of bricks projects a little beyond the previous one, giving the effect of a huge pointed funnel. There are the remains of a rough kind of high altar; otherwise the building is quite empty, and is not now used for religious purposes.

But in the same enclosure, and under the very shadow of the ancient shrine, is a comparatively modern Buddhist temple, containing an inner room where a colossal figure of Buddha painted yellow and red sits cross-legged on a raised platform; whilst on the outside walls of this square apartment are rows of colossal yellow figures carved in relief; the number corresponding to the number of the supposed incarnations of Buddha. Whilst we were being shown all this, active preparations had been going on for tea—a fire lighted—the kettle boiled, and then the younger members of the party proceeded to spread the tablecloth, and to arrange the cakes and the cushions, in the shade of the old grey walls. We were surrounded by a crowd of admiring Sinhalese, from the toddling infant, to the solemn looking caretaker. It seemed to afford them much amusement to watch the eccentric Britisher quitting his comfortable bungalow to sit sipping

his tea under difficulties, amongst the lizards and the ruins. For my part, I think I never tasted more refreshing tea nor sweeter cakes. The novelty of our surroundings added a piquancy to the flavour. One of our party proceeded to sketch the temple whilst the rest worked off their high spirits in running-about games. Fancy playing touchwood with palms for your base.

The lengthening shadows warned us that it was time to wend our way homewards, so having given the caretaker a liberal santhosem, we left the spot once more to the natives and the bats, and so ended my first and lastCeylon picnic, but the memory of the kind friends and the lovely tropical scene, and the curious mixture of East and West, will abide as long as I live.

One of the pleasantest results of my delightful sojourn in the island is that I feel I have laid up a stock of charming mental pictures, with which to beguile the dark winter days, when I sit lonely by my own fireside, listening to the pattering rain and the raging wind of our more northern clime.

The March days, in spite of intense noonday heat, passed all too quickly for my pleasure, for it had been settled that on the 16th of the month I must say good-bye to Ceylon, and wend my way homeward in the good ship

"Shropshire." Very loth was I to leave this beautiful country, and can imagine no more ideal home in which to settle, and no more interesting occupation than that of a planter, for those who find England too expensive and too overcrowded, and who have the necessary taste for out-door life. An income that would be decidedly narrow and inadequate at home would in Ceylon, when added to a planter's salary, provide all the comforts and many of the luxuries of life. A small patrimony (say five thousand pounds and upwards) well invested, added to good, steady, hard work, would probably, in time, enable a man to retire with a comfortable competency, but I cannot help saying that, in my opinion, Ceylon is no place for penniless men, unless, indeed, they have been brought up in unusually frugal homes, and are endowed with remarkably robust constitutions. Salaries have been cut down to the lowest sums at which it is possible to live and keep in health. If, by great self-denial, the young planter succeeds in keeping out of debt, he will find it to be the utmost he can do, and that no margin will remain for the proverbial "rainy day." Nothing for illness or periods of non-employment, misfortunes which may befall him through no fault of his own. The thriftless and idle, and unsteady, go to the dogs a little more quickly here than they would

in the old country, and the virtues of industry, self-reliance, and dependableness are as necessary for success in Ceylon as elsewhere. But I wish once more to repeat that for those possessing the necessary qualifications, monetary and otherwise, it is quite one of the most charming colonies in which to make a home.

The 13th of March at last arrived. Having said good-bye to my coolie friends, and having received many tokens of their good will, in the shape of crystals, curious insects, a snake skin, and a parrot, I, escorted by my son, started for Colombo. There we were joined by other friends proceeding by the same ship. Those last days passed at the luxurious Galle Face Hotel, where we all made such desperate efforts at make believe cheerfulness, soon came to an end. The partings were over, the last boat had left the ship, and we steamed away in the moonlight, the lights of Colombo becoming ever dimmer and dimmer, until the very last flash from the tall tower told us that we had indeed left the shores of Ceylon and those we loved behind us.

Oh! the sadness of these partings. The sorrow and the aching hearts which many of us, alas, must bear, as the penalty for our proud heritage, the world wide British Empire.

FINIS.